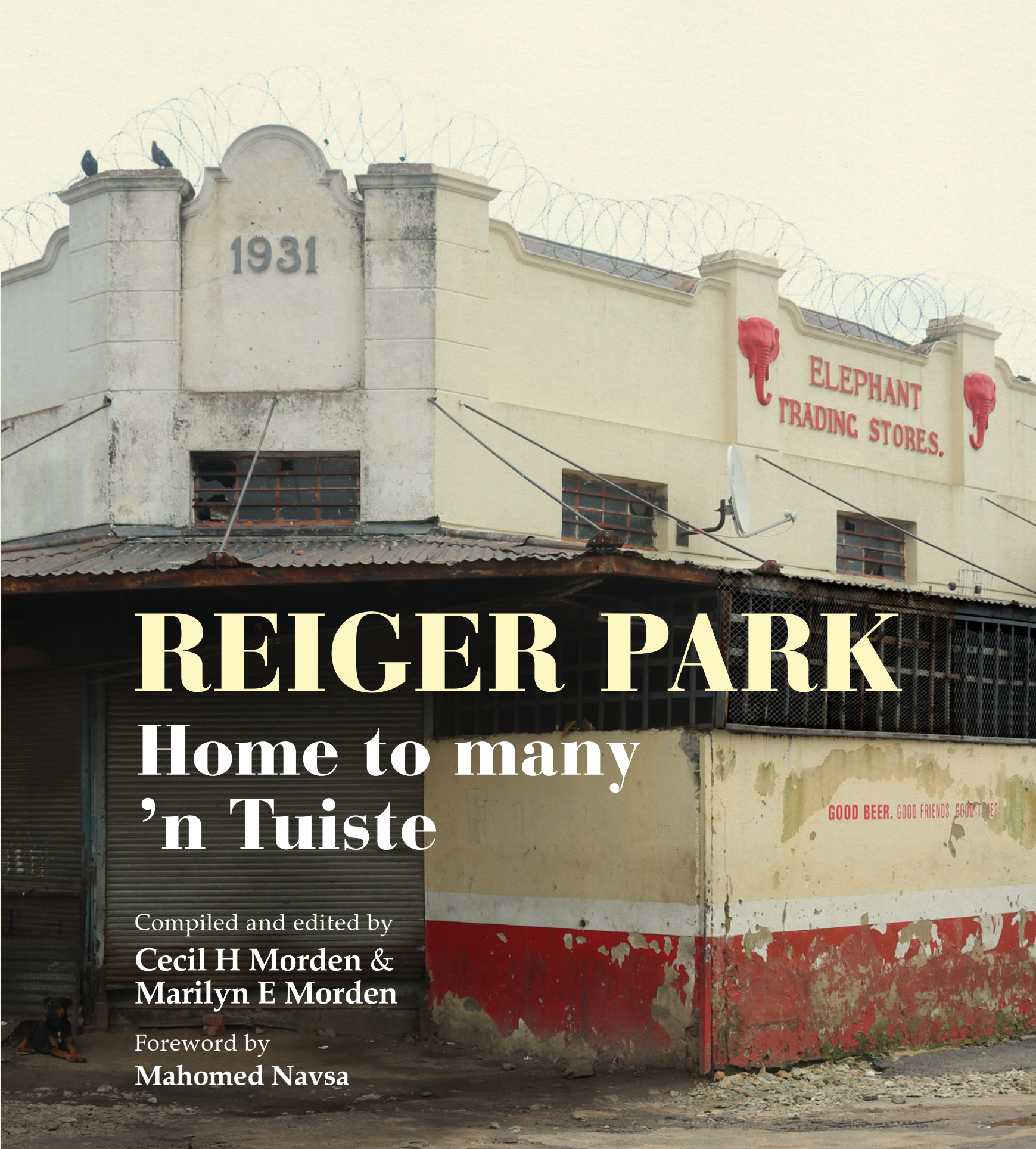


REIGER PARK

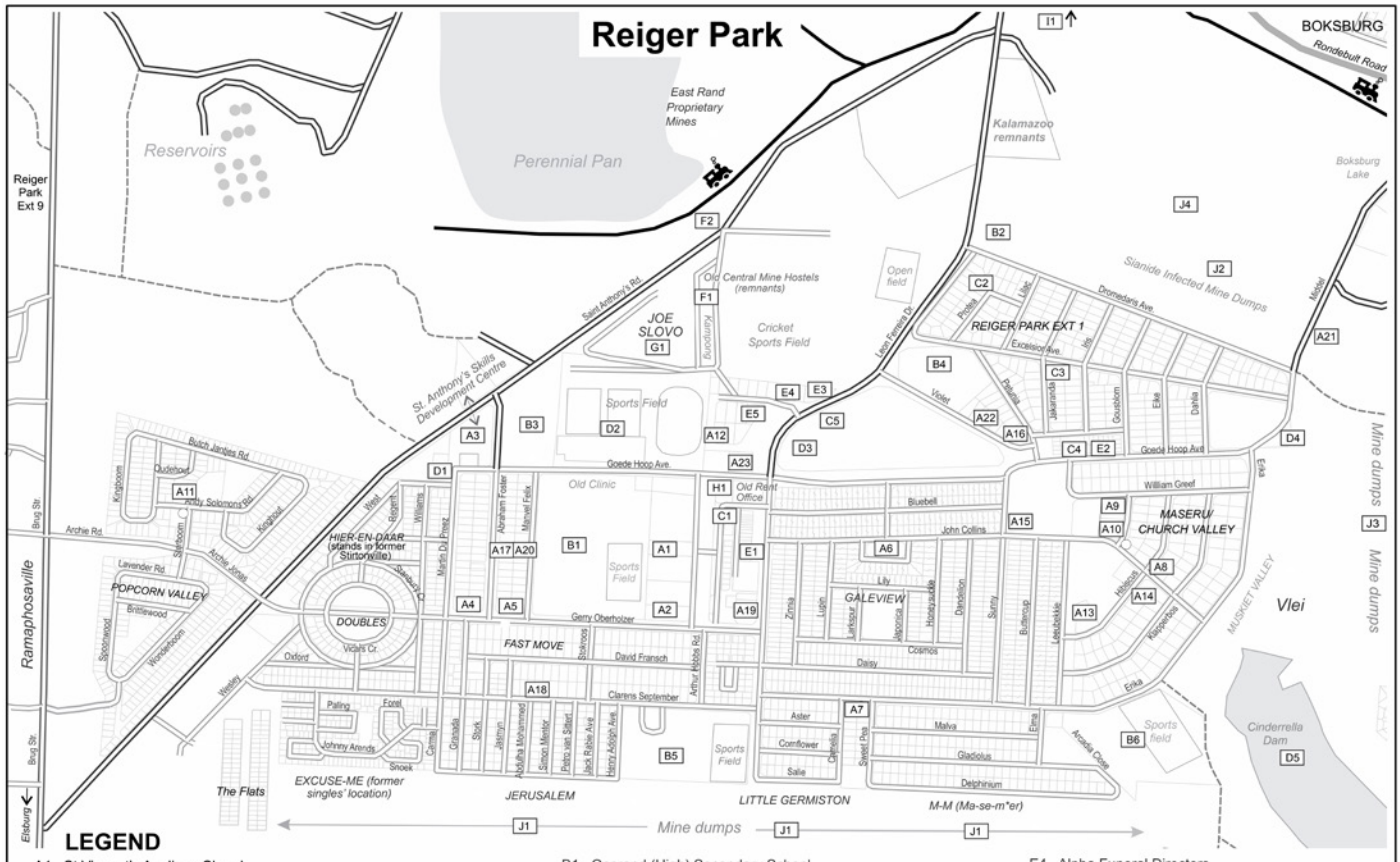
Home to many
'n Tuiste

Compiled and edited by

Cecil H Morden &
Marilyn E Morden

Foreword by

Mahomed Navsa



LEGEND

A1 St Vincent's Anglican Church
A2 Ebenezer Congregational Church – Phillips Memorial
A3 St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church/St Anthony's Skills Training Centre
A4 Apostolic Faith Mission Church (AFM)
A5 Methodist Church
A6 United Reformed Church (Ou NG Sendingkerk)
A7 Reformed Church/Gereformeerde Kerk (Doppers)
A8 Old Apostolic Church
A9 New Apostolic Church
A10 Seventh Day Adventist Church
A11 Pentacostal Protestant Church/ Pinkster Protestante Kerk
A12 Victory Tabernacle
A13 Lutheran Church
A14 Assembly of God
A15 International Assemblies of God
A16 Lede in Christus
A17 Free Baptist Church
A18 Baptist Church
A19 Judah Ministries International
A20 Evangelic Bible Church (EBC)
A21 Reiger Park Bible Church (previously Christen Werkers)
A22 Jehovah's Witness
A23 Mosque – Masjidun-Noor

B1 Oosrand (High) Secondary School
B2 Reiger Park Secondary School
B3 Goede Hoop Primary School
B4 Reiger Park Primary School
B5 Drommedaris Primary School
B6 Lakeside Primary School

C1 Dr Wilhase's Surgery
C2 Dr Nagdee's Surgery (former - Drs Cutting and Roberts)
C3 Dr Kamala's Surgery
C4 Dr Andrews' Surgery (until the late 1990s)
C5 Reiger Park Clinic

D1 Old Beer Hall (now part of the St Anthony's Centre)
D2 W J Clements Sports Stadium
D3 Reiger Park Civic Centre & Library
D4 Reiger Park Swimming Pool
D5 Cinderella Dam

E1 Shopping Centre - Galeview
E2 Shopping Centre - Reiger Park
E3 Petrol Station
E4 Alpha Funeral Directors
E5 Patrick Pietersen Funerals

F1 Remnants of the old Central Mine Hostel
F2 Elephant Trading Store

G1 Joe Slovo Informal Settlement

H1 Reiger Park Police Station

I1 East Rand Railway Station

J1 Mine dump - 1, (in the process of being removed)
J2 Mine dump - 2 (removed)
J3 Mine dump - 3 (removed)
J4 Stone Crushes and old mine shaft (removed)

REIGER PARK

Home to many / ’n Tuiste

Compiled and edited by
Cecil H Morden and Marilyn E Morden

Foreword by
Mahomed Navsa

abrile doman

2023

Reiger Park: Home to many / 'n Tuiste

Compiled and edited by Cecil H Morden and Marilyn E Morden,
incorporating the memoirs of Anthony D Andrews.
Saamgestel en geredigeer deur Cecil H Morden en Marilyn E Morden,
insluitende die memoires van Anthony D Andrews.

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Dedicated to
Abraham and Roseline Morden and to all parents of Reiger Park who,
during the 1960s and 1970s, invested everything they could in the next generations
and also to all the committed teachers who gave an extra helping hand.

"But in my mind was an anxiety about what might be ahead for South Africa.
Would it be possible for the different communities to come to terms with their past?
Or, as has happened so often elsewhere, would their future be lost in vengeful score-settling?"
Mary Robinson
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
President of Ireland

"Victim families have every right initially to the normal, valid, human response of rage,
but those persons who retain a vindictive mind-set, ultimately give the offender another
victim. Embittered, tormented, enslaved by the past, their quality of life is diminished.
However justified, our unforgiveness undoes us."
Marietta Jaeger

"If you don't let the past die, then it won't let you live."
Unknown

We, the people of South Africa,
Recognise the injustices of our past;
Honour those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land;
Respect those who have worked to build and develop our country; and
Believe that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity.
Preamble, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

This Bill of Rights is a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa. It enshrines the rights of all people in our country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality, and freedom. Everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected.
Bill of Rights, The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Alcoholics Anonymous
ABBDRW- LDRC	Actonville, Benoni, Boksburg, Daveyton, Reiger Park and Wattville Local Dispute Resolution Committee
AFDA	Africa Film Drama Art
AFM	Apostolic Faith Mission
AGS	Apostoliese Geloofsending
AME	African Methodist Episcopal Mission
ANC	African National Congress
APDUSA	African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa
APO	African People's Organisation, African Political Organisation
ATKV	Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging
AWB	Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging
BCCI	Boksburg Chamber of Commerce and Industries
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BFA	Bosmont Football Association
BIFSA	Building Industry Federation of South Africa
CAC	Coloured Advisory Council
CCC	Coloured Consultative Committee
CPC	Coloured People's Congress
CPNU	Coloured People's National Union
CPTA	Cape Professional Teachers' Association
CRC	Coloured Persons Representative Council
CUSA	Congregational Union of South Africa
DA	Democratic Alliance
DEIC	Dutch East India Company
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EFF	Economic Freedom Fighters
EMM	Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality
ERAS	East Rand Alumni Society
ERPM	East Rand Proprietary Mines
ETC	Eurafrica Training Centre
FCPP	Federal Coloured People's Party
FURD	Football Unites, Racism Divides
GAB	Group Areas Board
GMC	Modderfontein Gold Mining Company
GWU	Garment Workers' Union
HoR	House of Representatives (Tricameral Parliament)
IAPESGW	International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women
IBF	International Boxing Federation
ICC	Indian Consultative Committee
IDPs	Integrated Development Plans
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IRB	International Rugby Board
K.A.T.	Kopdoekie Afrikaans en Teater
KKNK	Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees
LMS	London Missionary Society
LRC	Legal Resources Centre
LTAB	Land Tenure Advisory Board
Mawu	Metal and Allied Workers Union
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement
MSRC	Medical Students Representative Council

NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAC	National Arts Council
NCP	National Chemical Products
NCPP	National Coloured People's Party
NCW	National Child Welfare
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
Ngoye	University of Zululand
NIC	Natal Indian Congress
NLL	National Liberation League
NP	National Party
Numsa	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
PA	Patriotic Alliance
RAU	Rand Afrikaans University
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
ROK	Randse Onderwyskollege
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SACP	South African Communist Party
SACPO	South African Coloured People's Organisation
SADF	South African Defence Force
SAEC	St Anthony's Education Centre
SAFA	South African Football Association
SAGF	South African Gymnastics Federation
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SANCA	South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence
SANOC	South African National Olympic Committee
SANRA	Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Raad vir Alkoholisme en Afhanklikheid van Verdowingsmiddels
SANTA	South African National Tuberculosis Association
SARB	South African Rugby Board
SARU	South African (Coloured) Rugby Union
SASF	South African Soccer Federation
SASL	South African Soccer League
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SAUK	Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie
SBC	Save Boksburg Committee
SOYA	Society of Young Africans
SPCA	Society for the Protection of Cruelty against Animals
SSSEHV	Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values
STC	Standard Telecommunications and Cables
TACT	Transvaal Association of Coloured Teachers
TAT	Transvaal Association of Teachers
THBC	Thembani Home Based Centre
TIC	Transvaal Indian Congress
TICTA	Transvaal Indian and Coloured Teachers Association
TMSA	Telephone Manufacturers of South Africa
Turfloop	University of the North
UCCA	Union Council for Coloured Affairs
UCT	University of Cape Town
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDP	United Democratic Party
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
Unisa	University of South Africa
USSASA	United School Sports Association of South Africa
UTASA	Union of Teachers' Associations of South Africa
UWC	University of the Western Cape
UWK	Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland
VKR	Verteenwoordigende Kleurlingraad
WONCA	World Organization of Family Doctors
WOW	Woorde open Wêrelde
YADA	Youth Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse
YCW	Young Catholic Workers

List of Contributors

Eugene Absolom is the director of the Tiger Brands Foundation since 2014. He previously served as the National Director of SOS Children's Villages International, and as Country Director of Interculture South Africa. He has a demonstrated track record in organisational and leadership development, and devotes of his personal time to several charitable causes and organisations focusing on improving the lives of the vulnerable in society. He lives with his family in Witfield, Boksburg.

Anthony D Andrews was born in Bremmersdorp (Manzini) in Swaziland (eSwatini) in 1953. He matriculated at Oosrand High School, Reiger Park in 1971, and qualified as a medical doctor at the University of Natal's Medical School (Black Section) in 1977. In 1981 he returned to Reiger Park as a General Practitioner. In addition to his basic medical qualifications, MBChB, he obtained a postgraduate diploma in Anaesthetics (1980) and completed a master's degree in Public Health (MPH) and a BCompt degree. In the late 1990s he joined the Transitional Local Council of Boksburg (later part of the newly established Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality) as head of its Health Department. He left the services of the Municipality in 2008.

Audrey Andrews was born in Actonville in 1956. In 1962 her family moved to Stirtonville where she attended Reiger Park Primary and Oosrand High Schools matriculating in 1974. She completed her nursing studies at Groote Schuur Hospital in 1979. In 1980 she qualified as a midwife and continued working at Coronation Hospital as a professional nurse. In 1984 she transferred to Boksburg-Benoni Hospital (today: Tambo Memorial Hospital). In 1999 she commenced with her theological studies part-time and was ordained as a deacon in 2010 and as a priest in 2011. In 2012 she was promoted to nursing manager and worked as a night superintendent until she retired in 2016. She continues as a priest at Reiger Park Anglican Church.

Joseph Gert Booysen was born in 1960. He began his school career in 1967 at Reiger Park Primary School and left Oosrand High School during standard 8. In 1977 he started working in a furniture factory in Cleveland, Johannesburg. Later he went

to work at EC Lending as a fitter and turner where he was trained in-house. He eventually acquired his journeyman certificate. On 12 November 1997 he and his wife Louisa Anne planted a congregation in Windmill Park, Boksburg. He obtained the Diploma in Pentecostal Ministry at the Auckland Park Seminary in 2000. In November 2002 he was confirmed as AFM pastor. He is a licenced marriage officer.

Ambrose E du Plessis was born in Benoni Location in March 1951. He attended Benoni Coloured Primary School and three high schools: William Hills, Germiston Coloured, and Oosrand. He matriculated in 1968 with a B level and the following year rewrote matric for an A pass. He discontinued his degree studies at the University of the Western Cape in 1970. He started working at Lennon Druggist and thereafter at a number of businesses until he joined Pick n Pay where he worked for 21 years. He retired in 2011. Ambrose has been involved in a number of community-based organisations affiliated to the Catholic Church, the last one being the Care of the Aged.

Marthinus (Tienie) Nathanial du Preez was born in Newclare, Johannesburg in 1928 and grew up in the Old Benoni Location. Having completed matric, he was offered a temporary teaching position at the Stirtonville Coloured School in 1945, during World War II. In January 1946 he enrolled at the Eurafrica Training Centre, Johannesburg for the Transvaal Teachers' Lower Diploma. On completion, he started teaching at the Benoni Primary School; in 1954 he was seconded to William Hills High School and later transferred to Coronationville High School. The Du Preez family emigrated to Canada in 1965. He completed the BA (Hons), and MA degrees at Toronto University in the 1970s. After initially working in the retail sector, he continued his teaching career. He retired from Firgrove Public School in Toronto, Canada in 1988.

Kevin Ehrenreich was born in 1950 in Parktown, Benoni. He matriculated at Oosrand High School in 1969. At Primary School he excelled at eisteddfods. Years later, in 1980, an aptitude test confirmed his aptitude for the creative arts and literary world. He has been involved part-time, from 1996, in various theatre and television productions. In 2016, he quit his job and joined the arts full time. In 2001, his series, *Agter die mynhoop* (Behind the mine dumps), was broadcast on kykNET, a television pay channel. His plays are performed at art festivals, locally and elsewhere.

Errol Fortuin was born in Benoni Location as the eldest of seven children. He completed his primary and high school years in Reiger Park. He was very involved in athletics and represented the Transvaal Schools at the age of 14. After matric in 1974 he was one of the first 12 Coloured persons to start working at the Atlas Aircraft Corporation. At the age of 22 he went to Bible School. On 26 October 1984 he was officially ordained into pastoral ministry. He travelled extensively to many countries preaching the gospel. He is married to Vianza and they have two daughters and a son.

Ockert Fransch was born in Benoni on 16 August 1957. He matriculated from Oosrand High School in Reiger Park in 1976. After school he qualified and worked for ten years as an electronic and computer technician. For the next 25 years he embarked on an eclectic entrepreneurial career, mostly in construction. He completed his master's degree in Business Administration (MBA) at the University of Cape Town in 2012. He currently assists small and medium sized businesses.

Edward Hank was born in Benoni Location. He started school at Actonville Primary School in 1964 and completed primary school at Reiger Park Primary. His high school years were spent at Oosrand and Chris J Botha in Bosmont,

Johannesburg. He completed the degrees BSc (Hons) and BPharm at the University of the Witwatersrand. He later completed his medical degree MBChB (2002) and master's in Public Health (MPH, 2013) at the Medical University of Southern Africa (MEDUNSA). He retired from the Gauteng Department of Health on 30 June 2022, where he was employed in the Public Healthcare Services since March 2003.

Henry Jeffreys attended schools in Benoni and Reiger Park, and matriculated at Oosrand High School in 1972. At high school he was a founding member of the Corsair Drama Group. He joined *Beeld* as a journalist in the early 1980s, the Urban Foundation in 1986 and worked for the National Business Initiative (NBI). He served as chairperson and executive director of the Soweto-based Funda Centre. In 1999, he was appointed deputy editor of *Beeld* and editor of *Die Burger* (2006-09). He was awarded the Nieman Fellowship in 2004 and attended Harvard University, Cambridge (USA) in 2004-05. He served as deputy chairperson and chairperson of the South African National Editors' Forum (SANEF). He was editor of *The New Age* for a brief period in 2010-11. In January 2013 he was appointed to the Adjudication Panel of the National Press Council. In March 2013 he received a MPhil-degree in Future Studies (Stellenbosch University Business School).

Myrna Kirk completed her schooling at Reiger Park Primary and Oosrand High Schools. She completed the BA (Hons) degrees at the University of the Western Cape in 1987. In 1990 she was awarded a scholarship for a master's degree at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls (USA). After graduating in 1992, she started her career at the University of the Witwatersrand. She currently assists businesses in developing high performing teams and leaders.

Japie Lapoorta was born in Germiston Location in 1954. He is married to Susan. They have four children. He holds a bachelor and honours degrees from the University of South Africa, a master's degree from UCT and a doctorate degree from the University of the Western Cape. He pastored various assemblies in the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa. He taught at the Sarepta Theological College and lectured part-time at the Theological Faculty at UWC. He was Deputy President of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

Albert Victor Martin Links (b. 1959) grew up in Stirtonville, Boksburg where he attended Goede Hoop Primary and Oosrand High Schools. He studied at the Universities of the Western Cape and South Africa, and the Damelin School of Management. He worked in various sectors of the economy, including the metal industry, retail and the railways. He is involved in several community organisations and church outreach programmes, serving on various committees.

Cecil Harold Morden was born in Germiston in 1956 and attended schools in Germiston and Reiger Park. He matriculated in 1974. He studied at the University of the Western Cape, completing his BCom (Hons) and Secondary Teachers' Diploma between 1975 and 1979. In 1988 he completed his MSc (Economics) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (USA). After a few years of teaching and lecturing, he worked as an economist. At the South African National Treasury he led the work on environmental tax reform. As a member of the East Rand Alumni Society he was involved in a number of community projects between 1985 and 1995. He is retired and occasionally consults on tax policy.

Marilyn Erna Morden (née Meyer) (BA, SED, Hons (Afr), UWC; MSc in Ed, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois, USA) was born and raised in

Genadendal in the Overberg, Western Cape where she also began her career as a Mathematics teacher. Thereafter she taught Afrikaans in Kraaifontein. She subsequently lived and worked in Reiger Park, Kimberley, Pretoria and returned to Boksburg. She is a retiree and the proud mother of Erna, Lizl and Cecile.

Mahomed Solomon Navsa was born in Edenvale in 1957. He schooled in Benoni and Kimberley. He graduated with degrees in law (BA, 1978 and LLB, 1980) from the University of the Western Cape. In 1982 he joined the Legal Resource Centre and spearheaded the establishment of a number of Advice Centres. In 1995 he was appointed to the bench at the Johannesburg High Court and to the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2001. Between 1998 and 2002 he was chairperson of the Legal Aid Board. In 2007 he served as acting justice of the Constitutional Court. He was appointed honorary professor at UWC in 2003 and received the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation Excellence in Leadership Award in 2019. He retired from the bench in 2022.

Mohamed Shaikh was born on the outskirts of Benoni, but regards himself as a son of Reiger Park, where he grew up and matriculated from Oosrand High School in 1975. He continued his tertiary education at the University of the Western Cape and Stellenbosch University. He holds the degree MJournalism and started his professional career in journalism – initially as a print and radio journalist – and later moved into corporate communications and management. He is currently Executive Manager Rectorate at Stellenbosch University.

Arnold Henry Smith was born in Stirtonville, Boksburg. He attended Goede Hoop Primary School, and Oosrand High School where he completed his matric in 1972. He continued his studies at the University of the Western Cape, attaining his BA (Hons) and Magister Artium (History) degrees and a Senior Teacher's Diploma. He spent most of his teaching years at Bishop Lavis High School in Cape Town. He is retired and lives in Rawsonville in the Western Cape.

Glenn Smithwick was born in Durban in 1956. He relocated to Boksburg in 1975, where he pursued a learnership in engineering design. At the age of 55, he left engineering, and began his calling as an evangelist. He currently works for the Northern Conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He has been married to Delphine for 44 years. They have 3 married children, and 5 grandchildren.

Doreen Solomons was brought up in a disciplined Christian home in Germiston. She qualified as a teacher at the Rand College of Education and taught for several years in the then Transvaal. In 1976, she was appointed as an Inspector of Physical Education (Girls) in Cape Town. She studied extensively, obtaining several qualifications at home and abroad, including a BA and postgraduate qualifications in Educational Psychology. She is the recipient of various sport awards and served as vice-president of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport. Through her field of expertise she became a global citizen.

Dwight Triegaardt completed matric at William Hills High School in 1961. In 1972 he completed his BSc (Chemistry) at the University of the Western Cape. Following repeated harassment by the South African security police, he left South Africa in late-1973 settling in Toronto, Canada where he completed his BSc (Hons) at York University in 1974. In 1976 he completed his MA (Chemistry) at Washington University, St Louis, Missouri (USA) and his PhD (Chemistry) at the same university at the end of 1982. He returned with his family to South Africa in 1983. He held various positions in academia and in the private sector.

Simon Stephen Wangra was born in Brakpan in 1944. He attended Benoni Primary School and matriculated at William Hills High School in 1962. Having completed the teacher's diploma at the Rand College of Education in 1965, he took up a teaching position the following year at the Germiston Primary School. He was seconded to assist with the establishment of the Oosrand High School in 1967. Between 1976 and 1993 he taught, as assistant and principal, at various schools on the East Rand. He retired early as Inspector of Education in February 1997. He served as an ANC councillor for Reiger Park and as deputy mayor from 1996 to 2000. He practiced as an attorney from September 2004 until his retirement in February 2021. He completed part-time the BA, BEd and BProc degrees and various diplomas.

Alfred Woodington was born in 1958 in Engcobo in the Eastern Cape. The family moved to Stirtonville, Boksburg in 1963, where he attended Goede Hoop Primary School. In 1979 he completed matric at Oosrand High School. Having worked in several factories, he joined the Metal and Allied Workers Union as a full time organiser in 1987. In 1989, he joined the African National Congress' armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and completed his basic military training in Transkei. In 1994 he joined Spoornet as a security manager and became an ANC Member of Parliament in 1998. In October 1999 he started a small business, which he successfully managed until the Covid-19 lockdown. He served as ANC proportional representative in the Ekurhuleni Municipality between 2001 and 2006. He passed away on 26 April 2021.

Introduction and acknowledgements

The history and stories of many people who called the various emerging mining towns on the East Rand home since the late 1880s have either never been told, deliberately distorted, or treated merely as a footnote in the recorded 'official' history of our beloved country. *Reiger Park – Home to many* is an attempt at making a contribution to address this shortcoming, as well as providing a broader perspective in charting the road ahead. A better understanding of our past might help to provide context and an appreciation of the challenges we are facing to build a more inclusive society and successful future. We should not forget, indeed we need to remember or be reminded of, this history. Yet at the same time we need to reconcile, to forgive and to join forces, to harness our collective efforts to build a better tomorrow. More effective interventions are required to help address the historical injustices that were perpetuated and the resulting extreme structural inequalities that emerged over a period of nearly three and a half centuries. Some of the 'wasted' years since 1994, state capture, the large-scale corruption and misallocation of scarce resources have not been helpful to address these shortcomings.

In 1978, during my studies towards my Secondary Teacher's Diploma, I was exposed to the debate amongst social scientists about the relative importance of nature and nurture in the development of children. The question was raised to what is more important: nature, i.e., our physical, mental, and other inherent abilities, or the environment (nurture), i.e., the personal, family and socio-economic circumstances in which we are raised. The first reaction might be to say obviously it is nature, you either have it or you do not. Years later I came across a related debate: whether leaders are born or 'made' (trained). I am not sure if there are definitive answers to these two questions, but it is clear that both nature and nurture are important in our personal development. However, we often underestimate the importance of nurture, which includes not only the nuclear family in which we grow up, the care and support of our parents, but

also the socio-economic environment, the cultural, religious, and other social institutions, and our social networks or lack thereof.

Structural poverty and institutional discrimination deny sections of society the opportunities to fully develop their natural abilities and one therefore often hears the phrase, 'I had to work twice as hard to get half the chance the other person got.' Sound personal habits, a good work ethic, perseverance, taking initiative and dedication are all important personal characteristics to ensure a degree of success in life. But the lack of (equal) opportunities due to structural factors might inhibit, retard, or derail the path to success for even the most committed and hard-working individuals.

The lack of adequate housing and municipal services (water, sewerage, etc.) and the lack of quality education often set in motion a vicious cycle that leads to structural underdevelopment and limited social mobility. It is in this context that a better understanding of our history as a community might help explain some of the successes we have achieved despite the odds, some of the failures we endured, and the many challenges that we must still confront.

The stories of many South Africans that have largely gone unnoticed or have been ignored are stories of survival, struggle, despair, hope, defeat, achievements despite the odds, and of conquering the many obstacles along life's journey. At times a feeling of hopelessness or fatalism as expressed by Adam Small in a poem: "Die Here het gaskommel / en die dice het verkeerd geval vi' ons / daai's maar al" (The Lord has rolled the dice, and the odds were stacked against us, that's all) might engulf us. Yet, Small and many others did not allow such despair to dampen their desire for a better future.

Reiger Park was moulded as a community over many years and has experienced significant progress during this period, while having to confront many enduring and recurring challenges. The pages of this book explore the origins of Reiger Park in the late 1890s. Much of the early history on the East Rand had been recorded by *The East Rand Express*, established in the late 1890s and later made way for a number of more focused local newspapers (including the *Boksburg Advertiser*, the *Benoni Times*, and the *Germiston Gazette*). Sadly, no copies of another local newspaper, *The Beam*, that originated in Reiger Park in 1984 and was published until 1995, have been preserved. The *East Rand Express*, the *Boksburg Advertiser* and a few other publications (also available online) provided much of the material for the first part of this publication. As a member of the East Rand School Board and the editor and owner of the *East Rand Express*, Mr William Hills also made an important contribution to education in the region during the 1930s. The well-known William Hills High School in Benoni location was named after him. But the churches, especially the Ebenezer Church, laid the foundations for education in Coloured areas in the Transvaal during the early 20th century, including the beginnings of William Hills High and what is today Goede Hoop Primary School in Reiger Park.

Twenty-three individuals kindly penned their own accounts about life on the East Rand since the 1950s (and earlier) and we captured the stories of eight individuals through interviews. Many spent their formative years in various townships (locations) on the East Rand and their families were later relocated under duress to Reiger Park, Eden Park and other racially segregated townships between the late 1950s and late 1970s. Their stories give a personal touch to the accounts of what life was like during some of the more turbulent years in the recent history of South Africa. Some, mostly professionals, refused to relocate to Reiger Park and moved to other parts of the country; others left the country on exit permits, and a few political activists went into exile. However, the majority remained and tried to make the best of an uncertain future. South Africa experienced its first 'brain drain' between the late 1950s and early 1980s, when many Coloured

professionals, tradesmen and women, artists, and sportsmen and women left for countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and a few African countries. The stories of Marthinus (Martin) Nathaniel du Preez (uncle Tienie) and Albert Johanneson, and the contribution by Dwight Triegaardt touch on these ventures into the unknown, the lure of a world free of racial discrimination and new beginnings. They speak of journeys abroad with very different outcomes, yet with one constant, their roots back home.

Many of these stories talk about everyday life, the struggles by some for decent housing, quality and affordable education for their children, and a social system that worked for a few but could not deal with the challenges many faced. It is about a community that had to confront job reservations, various prejudices within the community, for some the realities of broken families, and a subculture of gangsterism. Yet, despite all these challenges, there was always a sense of humour, and a desire to improve one's living conditions, a competitive spirit, especially on the sports fields, and a sense of community.

The contributions by Audrey Andrews, Tony Andrews, Ambrose du Plessis, Kevin Ehrenreich, Ockert Fransch, Edward Hank, Henry Jeffreys, and Dwight Triegaardt; the interviews with Charles and Noelene Billings, George du Plessis, and the extracts from Tienie du Preez's "Long Letter" cover journeys from Benoni to Reiger Park and beyond. Tony Andrews's memoirs tell a story of how ambition, dedication and perseverance trumped hardship and misfortunes. Japie and Paul Lapoorta, Arnold Smith, and Doreen Solomons, the interviews with Jim Abrams, and Raymond Geiler and Kenneth Whitecomb tell stories of life that started out in the dusty streets of Dukathole, Germiston location. The Lapoortas' life journeys took several twists, but their faith and perseverance helped them to overcome many obstacles. The story of Albert Johanneson, the international football legend, who pioneered the careers of many Black football players into the British Premier Football League, while enduring so much racial prejudice fills one with joy, hope, and sadness all at once. More than 60 years later, the racism Johanneson had to endure is very much alive in international football, and the fight against this evil in sport and elsewhere is ongoing. My own story covers a family's journey from Colesburg in the Northern Cape, Modderbee (Benoni), Kliptown, and Sophiatown (Johannesburg) to Reiger Park via Germiston location.

Simon Wangra's journey to Reiger Park started at State Mines, in Brakpan, and that of Mahomed Navsa in Kempton Park. Gert Booysen's contribution is a recollection of many people and events in Reiger Park and provides the link between Reiger Park and Herschel in the Eastern Cape, in the former Transkei homeland. Another link with this part of the country is Alfred Woodington's account, written shortly before his death. Following the death of his father Mohamed Shaikh's family moved from a smallholding in Van Ryn, on the outskirts of Benoni, to Reiger Park. Errol Fortuin's family also hails from Benoni, although his contribution focuses mainly on sports, and football in particular. Tom Kivedo grew up in Stirtonville, long before it was designated as a 'group area' for Coloured people, and Albert Links was born in Stirtonville, a few years before it became known as Reiger Park. Links provides an important overview of the role of Father Stan Brennan and the Catholic Church in Reiger Park. Myrna Kirk's contribution focuses on life in Reiger Park and touches on her family's links to the Eastern Transvaal, today's Mpumalanga. Jerry Theys shares his story about moving from the West Rand to Reiger Park in the late 1970s and his role as a community activist, involved in various organisations and projects and the publication of *The Beam*. Glenn Volmink's family moved from Alexandra Township to Reiger Park in 1964.

The contributions by Eugene Absolom and Glenn Smithwick provide the perspectives of young men

and their families that relocated to Reiger Park from Natal in the late 1970s and immersed themselves in and became part of a dynamic and at times traumatised community. Smithwick and his wife Vanessa made an impact in the areas of religion and social welfare; Absolom's father was a pastor in Reiger Park and the younger Eugene spent part of his early career addressing the challenges of alcohol and substance abuse in the area.

There are many more stories to be told. A few individuals did not respond to our request to be interviewed or to write their own stories; some individuals promised but did not put pen to paper and two promised to do so, but lost loved ones during 2020 and subsequently found it difficult to attend to our request. We had to cancel one interview in December 2020 after Marilyn and I both tested positive for Covid-19. We primarily covered the pre-1994 history of developments in Reiger Park. The post-1994 era brought along different dynamics, pressures and expectations, including the mushrooming of the 'informal' settlements that are now an integral part of the greater Reiger Park. To our regret these new developments could not be covered by the present project. There is room for more publications to cover those stories missing from this book.

The history of Reiger Park and the people who relocated there during the 1960s and 1970s is not only a continuation of the struggles many of their parents and grandparents had to endure since the late 1890s. The relocation also witnessed new forms of struggles and deprivations, but also new opportunities. Violence and gangsterism have plagued Reiger Park and many other communities for many years and to a lesser extent continue to do so today. It is only by investing in our youth and improving the quality and outcomes of education and training that we can hope to overcome this scourge. Many organisations have come and gone serving this community; two types have withstood the test of time: the schools and religious institutions (the numerous churches and the one mosque). A number of individuals are remembered as heroes and heroines; some are mentioned in these pages. There are many others who have done great deeds and who are fondly remembered by their loved ones.

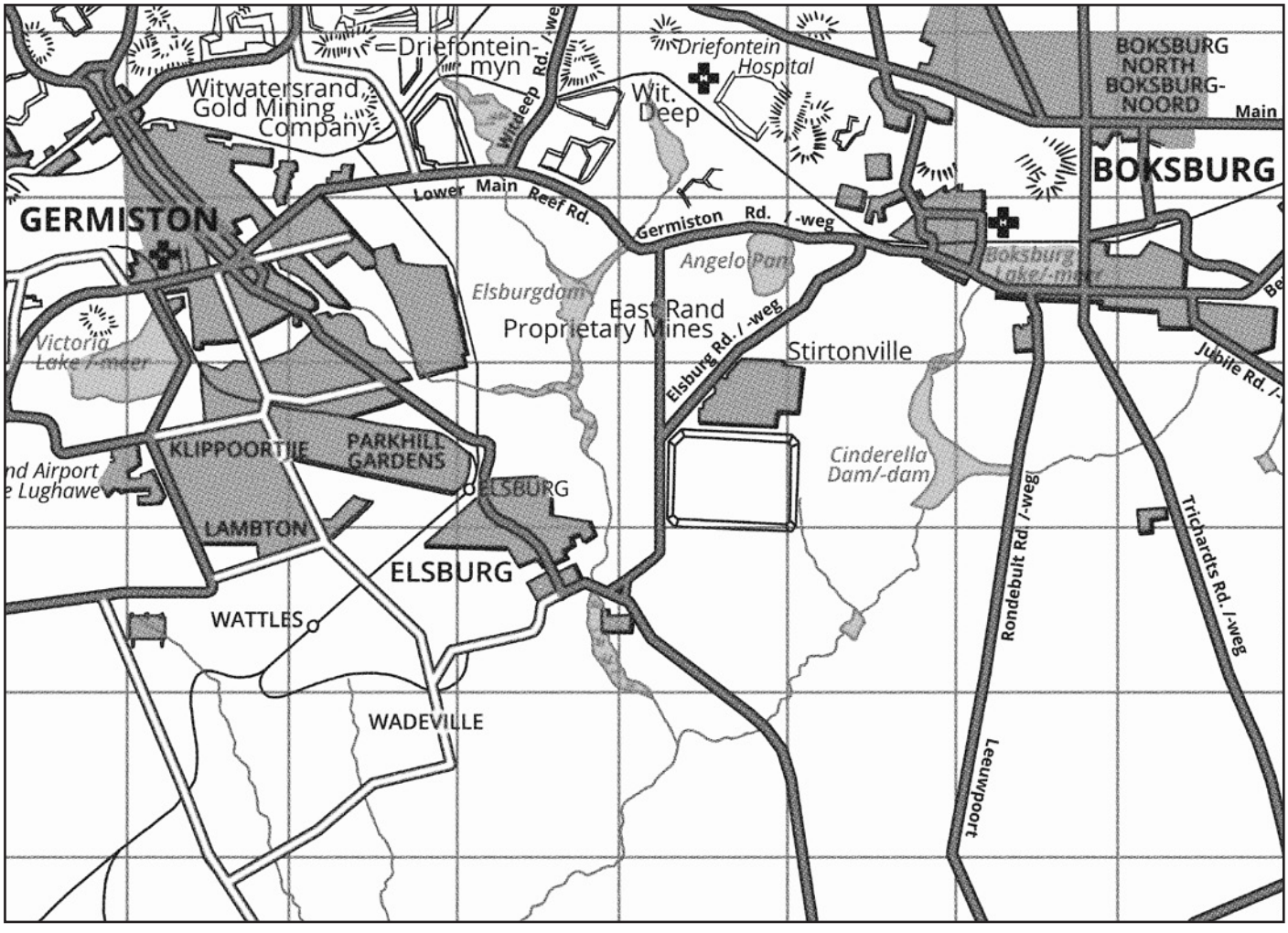
Much, certainly not all, of the optimism and enthusiasm following the non-racial democratic election in 1994 has been on the wane since around 2008. High levels of unemployment and a sense of being marginalised have emerged as major issues. Despite these negatives, the fighting spirit of the people of Reiger Park will not be dampened and progress on a number of fronts is self-evident. Many have also cast their sights beyond the geographic boundaries of the 'original' Reiger Park and a sense of a broader community should emerge over time. Yet, we should guard against becoming complacent or self-centred and not forget or ignore the struggles of many that might still feel forgotten or trapped with limited prospects of social mobility.

This book would not have been possible without the assistance and support of my wife and soulmate, Marilyn Morden. My daughter Lizl Natasha Morden edited the English text and Marilyn edited the Afrikaans text. A great thank you to Justice Mahomed Navsa who wrote the gracious foreword to *Reiger Park: Home to many.*

The first section of this book relies heavily on newspaper reports published in *The East Rand Express* (1898–99 and 1902–36) and the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* (from 1946 onwards). In the 1980s the latter was renamed *Boksburg Advertiser*, which to date is still the dominant local newspaper in Boksburg. I acknowledge that this project would not have been complete without the various reporters' views and contributions published in these papers. Verbatim extracts from these sources allow for a snapshot of the town and Reiger Park's past.

We thank all those who took the time to write their own stories and contributed images: Eugene Absolom, Anthony Andrews, Audrey Andrews, Gert Booysen, Ambrose du Plessis, Kevin Ehrenreich, Errol Fortuin, Ockert Fransch, Edward Hank, Henry Jeffreys, Myrna Kirk, Japie and Paul Lapoorta, Albert Links, Mahomed Navsa, Mohamed Shaikh, Arnold Smith, Glenn Smithwick, Doreen Solomons, Dwight Triegaardt, and Simon Wangra. A word of thanks to all those who allowed us to interview them: Jim Abrams, Charles (Ronnie) Billings and his wife Noeline Billings, George du Plessis, Raymond Geiler, Tom Kivedo, Jerry Theys, Glen Volmink, and Kenneth Whitecomb. Charles Billings and George du Plessis have since died. We also thank Melvin du Preez for permission to use extracts from his late father, Oom Tienie du Preez's, "Long Letter" and Elton Woodington who provided us with the writings of his late father, Alfred Woodington. Last, but not the least, a big thank you to Hein Willemse for facilitating the publication.

Cecil H Morden
Eveleigh Glades, Boksburg
November 2022



Detail of an AA Reef Road Map, showing Stirtonville, ca 1963.

Foreword

Mahomed Navsa

Reginald Heber, a prominent American lawyer, and leader in the Legal Aid Movement wrote: "Nothing rankles more in the human heart than the feeling of injustice." Cecil Morden and his wife Marilyn were the driving force behind this work. I got to know Cecil during the height of Reiger Park's resistance politics during the late eighties and early nineties. His commitment to community and country was always clear. He was clearly a deep thinker, intent on social cohesion and community well-being. He was and continues to be passionate about social justice. When he was younger it is fair to say that Cecil's passion was fiery and obvious. Now that passion has transformed into even deeper insights based on real life experiences, with an even greater commitment to being a voice for those who bear the brunt of exclusion from our beloved country's resources and the opportunities the Constitutional era promised but did not deliver. Cecil has always been forthright and brave. He and Marilyn are responsible for the greater part of the content of the book and made the arrangements for others to contribute. They are to be commended for recording the history of a community with so much care and attention. It is a remarkable achievement.

On the surface this book appears to be about the origins and establishment of a little-known community, Reiger Park. It is, however, much more than that. It is the story of many, many, communities scattered throughout the country. In a world in which it is becoming increasingly difficult to tell fact from fiction, in which populist rhetoric and gratuitous insults abound, this book is an authentic voice. It took a great deal of research, time, and effort.

Many historical figures have asserted across centuries that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it. History warns this country and the world that oppression will ultimately be resisted. That deprivation and suffering will only be borne for a limited time. That racial triumphalism can only end in disaster, that the poor cannot be ignored indefinitely, and that the environment, mishandled, will strike back.

The present state of the planet and our country shows that we have learnt nothing from history and are bound to repeat the terrible mistakes of the past.

Reiger Park: A Home for All / 'n tuiste speaks volumes about the strength of deprived communities to overcome adversity and to rise beyond a multitude of formidable challenges. It is about maintaining dignity in the face of oppressive circumstances and as the personal stories will attest, it is about rising above one's circumstances.

Reiger Park, like many other communities, continues to be plagued by social ills that accompany poverty and deprivation. Present new community leadership in the township, as the book shows, is hard at work attempting to alleviate suffering and promoting unity. The problem is that communities such as ours can only be fully admitted to social justice if there is deliberate, benevolent, and meaningful government intervention. Government is bound by the Constitution and by the high price paid for our present freedoms to ensure a place in the sun for every one of its citizens. If we are to ensure that the Constitution is more than mere parchment it is imperative that there be social justice.

Despite all the difficulties recorded in the book there is an old-world charm to communities such as ours. People look out for each other, and township street humour is uplifting. Sunday mornings see the streets filled with families on their way to and from church. Church gatherings are a source of solace as are the sounds of choirs. Children streaming to religious classes and prayers, especially on Friday afternoons to the sole mosque, are testament to the community's strength in diversity. It has come a long way but with much road still to travel.

All the people who contributed to the book and its inhabitants at large have been enriched by their time in this truly remarkable community.

I trust that like me you will find this book inspirational and uplifting and that you too will be a voice for inclusivity and justice for all.

Justice of Appeal: Supreme Court of Appeal
(Retired)
Johannesburg
November 2022

PART I

Reiger Park

Its history and development

Cecil H Morden

An aerial photograph of Reiger Park surrounded by mine dumps, ca 1972.

1

The early days of Boksburg

"Until the lion learns how to write, every story will glorify the hunter."
– Chinua Achebe, *Things fall apart* (1958)

The area known today as Reiger Park, previously referred to by different names, is home to many people of colour, predominantly Coloureds.[1] What was intended, from the early 1960s, to be a location for Coloured people has its origin as a location comprising two areas: one home to Black and Coloured people and another one for Asians, mostly Indians but also a few Chinese. These two areas were established in 1908 in close proximity to each other; the former known as Stirtonville and the latter as the (new) Asiatic Bazaar (No. 1). A superintendent for these two areas was appointed in September 1908. Mr PW Anderson was the successful candidate out of 60 applications, partly due to his "thorough knowledge of Hindustani and Tamil".[2] An older 'Native' location accommodating both Black and Coloured people, and an adjacent, older Asiatic Bazaar (No. 2) were in existence in Boksburg since around 1890.[3]

For those who grew up in Reiger Park between the 1960s and 1980s, remnants of the old Asiatic Bazaar were referred to as Kalamazoo, a small area to the north of the current Reiger Park Secondary School, while the 'Native' location was located in the vicinity of the school. These two areas were the nearest residential areas to the south of East Rand railway station. Later these areas became an 'eyesore' to the powers that be and in 1908 it was decided to move them further away from the station and the main road to two new areas.

The early days of Boksburg

In 1860 Mr Carl Ziervogel bought the farm Leeuwpoort, east of "the busy little centre of" Elsburg, consisting of about 3 000 morgen for £75. He later sold it to Mr Abe Bailey of the Barnato group for a handsome profit. On 15 October 1886, Pieter JJD Kilian discovered gold on the farm Vogelfontein, and almost four months later, on 7 February 1887 these farms were declared public diggings. The proclamation came into effect on 21 March 1887, a date that is generally viewed as the

official founding day of Boksburg. Soon thereafter the farms Klipfontein and Driefontein were incorporated into Boksburg. Boksburg was the second town to be proclaimed on the Witwatersrand, after Johannesburg. The town was named after the then State Secretary, Dr W Eduard Bok.[4]

The first buildings to be erected in Boksburg were hotels, constructed from air-dried bricks. The Masonic Hotel was first, followed by the Central Hotel. The Standard was the first bank in the town. It began its operations in 1888 in one of the rooms of the Central Hotel. The first house in Commissioner Street was built for the Mining Commissioner. Thereafter the Post Office, the Mining Commissioner's office and the Magistrate's Court followed.

The depth of the gold reef initially slowed down the pace of gold mining. However, the discovery of coal deposits in Boksburg by Johannes Gauf in 1888 and later more coal further to the east, i.e. Brakpan, Springs and much later in what is known today as Mpumalanga, gave a new impetus to the gold mining industry. A fire broke out in the Holdfast Coal mine in 1894, the first of a series of fires that were to wipe out the coal mines in Boksburg over a two-year period. A railway line between Boksburg and Johannesburg, constructed by George Pauling to transport coal to the goldmines on the Reef, was opened in 1890. This railway line was later extended further east, up to Springs.

Between 1887 and 1903 Boksburg was administered by a Health Board under the control of the Mining Commission and the Special Magistrate of Johannesburg. Many flocked to the Reef, including Boksburg, in search for gold. "But the riches were for only the few; the majority, with their primitive digging equipment, were barely able to eke out a living."[5] During this period a number of mines were established in the area: New Blue Sky, Comet, Driefontein, Cason, Angelo, Cinderella, Leeuwpoort and Agnes Munro. All these mines were consolidated into East Rand Proprietary Mines (ERPM) by 1893.[6] At a depth of 3 585 metres ERPM was one of the deepest mines in the world. The number of mine employees declined significantly between 1903 and 1956.

> In 1956 East Rand Proprietary Mines Limited employed an average of 2 156 Europeans and 12 960 non-Europeans. About one-quarter of the European staff lived in houses owned by the company and virtually the entire non-European employees lived in three large compounds situated in the vicinity of the main hoisting shafts. During 1956 about £2 297 718 was spent on European labour, and £971 075 on non-European labour.[7]

ERPM's underground mining operations ceased in 2008. The first Mining Commissioner appointed in 1888 was Mr Montagu White, who also played an instrumental role in the construction of the Boksburg Lake. Long-term Coloured prisoners from Johannesburg were used during its construction period. The lake was virtually empty for a while and was only filled with water after a thunderstorm in 1891.

The Boksburg Town Council was inaugurated on 1 December 1903 and Councillor B Owen Jones was elected as its first mayor. By 1903 Boksburg had a population of 1 650: 750 white males, 467 white females, 344 native males, 55 native females, 28 coloured males and 6 coloured females.[8] In addition, the approximately 22 624 workers (mostly black) who lived in the surrounding mine hostels, known as compounds, were not counted as part of the population of Boksburg. The mine compound adjacent to Reiger Park, officially referred to as the Central Compound, was constructed between 1902 and 1905 as part of the Hercules Gold mine. Another mine compound, the Cinderella Compound, was located not far from Reiger Park.[9] In 1969 the Cinderella Compound housed 4 334 mineworkers. The countries of origin and number of these workers were: Malawi, Zambia and Rhodesia (1 460); Portuguese East Africa (1 882); Lesotho (249); Botswana (24); Swaziland (40), and South Africa (679).[10]

Elephant Trading Store, constructed in 1931, is located directly across Central Compound mine hostel and the Joe Slovo informal settlement in Reiger Park. It served as one of the main shopping places for the miners (CH Morden, 2021).

Mineworkers and the experiment with Chinese labourers

When the Second Anglo-Boer War, also referred to as the South African War, erupted on 11 October 1899 there was an exodus of British miners and black mineworkers from the Witwatersrand, and the gold mines were forced to temporarily close. During this war, in addition to White concentration camps, Black concentration camps were also established as part of Lord Herbert Kitchener's scorched earth policy in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republics. The ruins of a Black concentration camp were identified on a historical map in the vicinity of the 'Stone Crushes'. This Boksburg camp appears to have been established during July 1901. Out of approximately 38 000 Black individuals interred in concentration camps across the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Republics, as many as 30 000 were women and children. Most of the people confined in the Boksburg Black concentration camp were also women and children; only about 15% were men. There were an estimated 637 individuals in the Boksburg Black concentration camp in July 1901 and by October 1901 this number had increased to 1 997.[11]

Before the war about 90 000 black mineworkers were employed in the mines on the Reef; after the war, by July 1903, only about 55 000 black mineworkers had returned.[12] Despite the shortage of unskilled workers on the mines there was a general reluctance by mine owners and the White

inhabitants of the Transvaal to make use of labourers of Indian descent. This reluctance stemmed from a fear that Indians would outcompete White workers. In addition, the fact that Indians were British subjects also seemed to have been an important consideration. The White people in Transvaal were concerned that Indians might be entitled to rights that could compromise their own interests. *The East Rand Express* voiced the views of probably a large section of the White residents of Transvaal in 1906 most crudely: "The Indian is a most undesirable resident, and if he were imported as a mine worker he would remain here as a hawker, mechanic, or merchant."[13] The paper was to repeat these views when it responded to a letter by Mr AM Bhyat five years later, in October 1911.

In the 1903 annual report of ERPM Ltd presented soon after the war its chairman, Sir George Farrar, strongly argued for the importation of Chinese labourers to help address the labour shortage in the mines. The express condition was that the Chinese workers had to be repatriated when their contracts ended. The first group of 1 054 Chinese labourers sailed from Hong Kong on the *Tweeddale* on 25 May 1904. They were destined for the gold mines on the Witwatersrand, and a large percentage found their way to the New Comet mine on the East Rand. It did not take long for some of these Chinese labourers to abscond from the mines to start their own businesses. "The Chinese labourers go to their storekeeping compatriots for opium and secure what they want."[14] Two years later, in May 1906, after much debate about, among others, some of the working conditions of these workers, the authorities in Britain under the leadership of the Liberal Party, and reportedly against the wishes of the local mining industry, decided that Chinese labourers working on the mines had to be repatriated.[15] The repatriation commenced in June 1907. "The men travelled by train to Jacob's station, Natal, where they were kept until the *Heliopolis*, which sailed them to China, was ready to sail."[16]

The shortage of unskilled labourers to work on the mines on the Witwatersrand following the Anglo- Boer War (1899 to 1902)[17] also resulted in recruitment efforts stretching as far as the Portuguese Territory on the east coast, present-day Mozambique, and of the Hereros who fled the German occupation and suppression in German (South) West Africa, present-day Namibia. Between 1902 and 1905 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association recruited on average 37 000 unskilled workers per year from southern Mozambique. The large-scale recruitment of the Hereros to work on the mines does not appear to have been successful.[18]

Although most of the unskilled workers employed by the mines stayed at the mine hostels, a few who left the employment of the mines and those recruited to work at businesses other than the mines and for private (white) individuals had to find accommodation. Many of them stayed on the premises of their employers, the beginning of back-yard dwellers. The development of the gold mining industry on the Witwatersrand also attracted Indian traders from Natal, thus beginning what the *East Rand Express* described in the early 1900s, in various issues, as the 'Asiatic Invasion' or the 'Asiatic Trading Question' and the need for a separate place to trade and reside for the Indians on the East Rand.

The Asiatic Bazaars and Native (and Coloured) locations in Boksburg

Between November 1860 and 1911 approximately 152 184 indentured labourers arrived in Natal from India to work on the sugar plantations. This was the result of an agreement between India, Britain and the Colonial Authorities in Natal. Upon the completion of their indenture periods, the Indian labourers were free to stay on in South Africa or to return home; most opted to stay in Natal. Later several Indians came to South Africa as 'free passengers', mainly as traders. This wave

of immigration by Indians was stopped in 1914.[19] After 1880 large numbers of Indians moved to the diamond fields near Kimberley and the gold mines in the Transvaal. In 1898 the Transvaal government passed a law restricting Indians from owning gold mining fields.[20]

In 1904 Mr MK Gandhi represented an Indian trader doing business on the East Rand for not being in possession of a Travelling Trader's licence as was required by Article 16 of Law 17 of 1899.[21] The following year at a public meeting in February 1905, the President of the Boksburg Chamber of Commerce, Mr A McDowell, and the honorary secretary of the East Rand Vigilance Association, Mr W Hills, both tabled two similar but separate motions requesting the Town Council to do everything within its means to prevent any Asiatic person from residing or trading in town. One of the Chamber's concerns was three white business owners who intended to lease their business premises to Indians. Both these motions were carried with only one and two dissents respectively.[22]

The *East Rand Express* triumphantly reported on 8 November 1905: "On the East Rand, thanks to the determined stand taken up, Asiatic traders have not been able to get a foothold, but the evil seems to be spreading elsewhere".[23] A few years later, in a letter to the editor of *The East Rand Express* dated 18 October 1911, Mr AM Bhyat, who later left behind a business dynasty in Boksburg, objected to an article in the same newspaper the previous week as being derogatory to Indians and not in line with the motto of the British government of "Freedom, Equality and Justice". He noted in his letter that at the time he had already been in South Africa for twenty-five years.[24] The editor responded to this letter in the same issue in which the letter was published with the following revealing and racist comments: "The real issue he (Mr Bhyat) seems to overlook is that the struggle between Europeans and Asiatics is economic, not racial. Self-preservation is the first law of nature; it is impossible for a European to compete on equal terms with an Asiatic, for the simple reason that the Asiatic's standard of living is so much lower than the European's that competition on equal terms is out of the question."[25]

As early as September 1903, a few months before the formal inauguration of the Boksburg Municipality, the Health Board was petitioned by white residents and traders to move the existing Asiatic Location (Kalamazoo).[26] The white inhabitants of Boksburg requested that a permanent Indian Bazaar should be located "somewhere to the south of the town"; the objection to the current one was its proximity to Vogelfontein, close to the current Boksburg Station, which resulted in a depreciation in the value of the stands in this suburb.[27]

In May 1905 the Boksburg Town Council was briefed that the government had reached an agreement with ERPM Limited and one of its subsidiaries, Hercules Company Limited,[28] for an area of twenty-five acres in size[29] located one and a half miles from Market Square, Boksburg, and half a mile from the existing Asiatic Bazaar for the establishment of a new Asiatic Bazaar and a new Native Location. The plan was to set aside eleven acres for the new Asiatic Bazaar west of the road leading to Elsburg and fourteen acres east of the road for a Native Location.[30] The Town Council requested that the government place both locations under the control of the Council. During the debate it was suggested, but later dismissed fearing further delays, that the two locations be "widely separated, as placing them contiguously, as was proposed, was practically encouraging the native to spend his money with the Coolie Trader."[31]

On 21 July 1906 *The East Rand Express* reported on the deteriorating conditions and overcrowding in the old Asiatic Location. The overcrowding was the result of Indians letting rooms to Natives and "Coloured people of African descent" at exorbitant

rents. The paper urged the Town Council to appeal to government to proceed with the establishment of the (new) Native Location as soon as possible.[32]

In August 1906 the Boksburg mayor reported that the "long-discussed" question of the Asiatic Bazaar and Native Location had been resolved and would soon be gazetted.[33] The new Native Location and the new Asiatic Bazaar were to be located adjacent to each other with the Asiatic Bazaar on the eastern side. More than two years later 31 December 1908 was set as the date after which all Natives and Indians had to reside in the new locations, except for Natives who were domestic servants or mineworkers who could reside on the premises of their European employers.[34]

In a letter published 22 August 1908 a resident, only referred to as "Respectable Native Resident" of the old native location, complained about White men taking advantage of women in the location and the problem with gangsters. The editor responded on 29 August 1908 by supporting the concerns raised by the letter writer and noting complaints the paper had received over several months about the lawlessness existing in the location. He mentioned that these problems could be dealt with in the new location as the Location Superintendent would be able to control entry into the location.[35]

In February 1909 the Town Council was briefed by the Health Committee that a number of Indians had moved to the new Asiatic Bazaar and that thirteen stands were allocated to individuals holding general dealer's licences. At the time about thirty-eight families were already residing in the new location.[36] In addition, following a decision by the Germiston Magistrate's Court, a large number of Natives from the Balmoral location applied for stands in the new Native location. This necessitated the Boksburg Municipality exploring the notion of increasing the geographical area of the location. In April 1909 the Town Council was again briefed on the urgent need to apply for an enlargement of the new Native Location due to the large influx of Natives into the location from various places within the Municipal area.[37]

As mentioned previously, the old Native Location and old Asiatic Bazaar were adjacent to each other, not far from the East Rand Railway station. Three individuals, Hendrik de Vos, a 'Cape boy', Margaret Nijo and William Rosane, were charged on 26 January 1909 with residing in a prohibited area, in contravention of the Gold Law of 1908. This prohibited area turned out to be the old Native Location that was located on part of the Vogelfontein farm. Although it was argued that no formal government permission was given for people of colour to occupy the area, Mr Barend J Kleynhans, a former Mining Commissioner, testified that he had reserved the area as a native location as far back as 1892, under the powers conferred upon him by Section 28, Law 10 of 1891.[38] It was also reported that a certain Mr Pritchard pegged sixty-three claims in the area and subsequently agreed to surrender twenty-two claims for the purpose of the old Native Location. At a later stage six of these claims were transferred to the government for the purpose of the (old) Asiatic Bazaar. The Magistrate concluded that although the old Native Location was never legally reserved, as only the government was empowered to do so,[39] those living there did so with the tacit approval of the government. However, such tacit approval came to an end on 31 December 1908 when Notice No. 1198 of 1908 came into force, which required that all Natives and Coloureds had to move to the new Native Location as from that date. The three accused were found guilty and were fined a nominal penalty and one day's imprisonment.

In a similar case, but with a very different outcome, a resident, Mr Suliman Esop of the old Asiatic Bazaar, was charged on 3 March 1909 with unlawfully residing on proclaimed land. In this

case the government admitted that the area was formally set aside as a location for Asians in 1898. The government's contention was that the area ceased to be a location when Notice No. 1198 of 1908 came into force on 31 December 1908. The Supreme Court Judge ruled that Law 3 of 1885, in terms of which the area was initially proclaimed, did not have any provision to de-proclaim an area once it was proclaimed and that Notice No. 1198 of September 1908 had no effect in this instance. The old Asiatic Bazaar was legally still a location; hence the conviction was set aside.[40]

In March 1910 the Health Committee recommended to the Town Council that they erect eighty huts in the new locations for rental, as many of the prospective residents could not afford to own the huts. A rental of 7s. 6d. per month was proposed. It was also reported that the population of the new locations stood at 1 050 by the end of February 1910.[41]

On 11 June 1910 *The East Rand Express* reported a visit by the paper to the old and new Native Locations and the old and new Asiatic Bazaars. By then the old Native Location was completely destroyed, with only some of the foundations remaining. In the case of the old Asiatic Bazaar it was observed that, "The Indian quarter, however, remains, as it appears that the Indians had more legal right to stop evictions than the natives."[42] This comment was probably a reference to the Esop court case the paper reported on a little more than a year earlier, in March 1909.

The same report of 11 June 1910 noted that authorities initially had to make use of the might of the law to force residents to move to the new locations. This was evident from the two court cases quoted above. However, it soon became clear that the new locations were too small, given the huge demand for housing on the East Rand. The old Asiatic Bazaar (Kalamazoo) was to remain a thorn in the flesh of the Boksburg Town Council for many years to come.

By June 1910 there was a new superintendent in place for the two new locations, Mr SA Stirton. This is most probably the person after whom the new Native Location, Stirtonville, was later named. Over time Mr Stirton seems to have gained the trust and affection of some of the residents of the new locations in Boksburg. Many years later, in 1923, 152 residents of the Native Location signed a letter ("testimonial") in support of Mr Stirton, following a court case in which it appears Mr Stirton was charged with some misdemeanour following complaints by some of the residents of the location. *The East Rand Express* reported the incident as follows:

> In view of the decision of the local magistrate in a recent location Court case, we publish the following testimonial submitted by residents of No. 1 Boksburg Native Location to the Boksburg Town Council. It is signed by 152 residents:
>
> We, the undersigned residents of the Boksburg Native Locations, herewith wish to place on record: -
>
> That whereas there are certain malcontents amongst the Natives in the locations here who are continually causing trouble by holding private meetings and venting certain fancied grievances, and thereby working up others into a state of discontent and excitement concerning the management by the Superintendent (Mr SA Stirton) of the said location, that whereas these grievances in our opinion are unfounded and imaginary and greatly exaggerated.
>
> Therefore, we wish to express ourselves by stating that so far as we are concerned, we have no complaints or faults to find against the treatment meted out to us by Mr Stirton, who we consider a just and impartial man, carrying out his duties without fear, favour, partiality or prejudice.[43]

Remnants of an old retail store in Kalamazoo (CH Morden, 2021).

Asiatic Bazaar No. 2 (Kalamazoo)

The ground on which the Asiatic Bazaar was developed was officially made available to Indians at around 1895 for a period of ninety-nine years by the Old Republic Government. There is evidence that people were already living in the area a few years earlier as it is reported that a wooden and iron structure in the area was used by the Muslim community as a prayer room since around 1885 and converted into a mosque in 1893.[44] The Boksburg Town Council had tried its level best to flatten the old Asiatic Bazaar since 1903 but with very little, if any, success.[45] In July 1921 *The East Rand Express* reported:

> It looks as though the Boksburg Town Council is going to have further trouble in respect of what is known as the "Old Asiatic Bazaar" now officially known as "Bazaar No. 2".
>
> The origin of the trouble reaches back to the early days of the town and involves all sorts of complicated legal questions of ownership and squatters' rights. By reason of these knotty points the area concerned has remained through the years a sort of 'No man's Land' – in spite of the fact that the Bazaar was vested in the Town Council in 1914 by the Crown Grant No. 340 and registered by the Registrar of Deeds in November of 1914.
>
> The position and lay out of the area were always considered an eye-sore and from the sanitary point of view dangerous both to the residents and the community.
>
> A new Bazaar was laid out on ground further south in August 1906, and extended in 1910, but most of the Indians remained where they were, and no arguments could persuade them then or since to adopt the new quarters. According to the report of

> the Town Council, there are only two residents in the whole area who regularly paid rent for the lots upon which they live and trade.
>
> No self-respecting community can allow any one section of its number to deliberately and systematically thwart the regulations which are set up for the control and protection of all.[46]

The editorial further expressed the hope that a satisfactory and constitutional solution in the interest of all would be found.

Twenty-eight years later, in 1949, the local weekly newspaper that replaced *The East Rand Express*, the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, referred to the old Asiatic Bazaar as a festering sore and expressed the hope that shanties in the area "so obvious from the train and main road" will soon be demolished.[47] The area was considered both dangerous and a health risk. Boksburg municipal officials and even the police were afraid to venture into it. It was said that shebeen (beer) queens were calling the shots. "Liquor is retailed (after being diluted and doctored with illegally purchased methylated spirits and other alcohols) at exorbitant prices to all consumers – Indians, Natives and Europeans of a lower class. There is a move afoot for the complete clearance of this section shortly; it cannot come too soon."[48] After an inspection of the area in April 1949 one of the Boksburg Town Councillors complained: "I have never seen such a filthy outfit in my life. One of those who went with us, got sick from the unbearable stench which met us at certain places."[49]

By June 1949 there were still more than fifty houses in the Asiatic Bazaar, of which four were condemned and demolished under the Slum Act. The four houses were thoroughly disinfected – pumped full of DDT by a special machine – before being pulled down by workers from the Town Council. Four cases of smallpox originated from one of the demolished houses. The families from the four demolished houses, on 14 June 1949, found alternative accommodation in the Stirtonville location. Most of the other houses, inhabited by both Indians and Natives, were also in a bad state.[50] Many houses had apparently been let to Natives by the Indian owners. "The Bazaar is a money-making area for the (Indian) owners as not only do they benefit from rents, but also the shops in the area do excellent trade."[51]

In early November 1949, the occupants of stands 24, 39, 57 and 69 in Asiatic Bazaar No. 2 were given thirty days' notice to vacate their houses. Later that month the Slums Court condemned a further six houses: stand 8, occupied by thirteen persons; stand 9, occupied by nine persons; stand 10, occupied by twelve persons; stand 12, occupied by twelve persons; stand 41, occupied by six persons; and stand 49, occupied by twelve persons. The Medical Officer of Health, Dr LR Saayman, said these houses constituted a danger to the town's health. Mr HN Massel, who appeared on behalf of some owners of the properties, asked for a twenty-one day postponement which the Town Council rejected. The council agreed to build temporary accommodation for the evicted persons costing about £15 to £20 per abode (8 x 8 x 8 feet). The temporary accommodation was to be in place until such time as the government approved a new Indian township (Zindabad), which was expected to take two years.[52]

Nine years later, in 1958, it was reported that an appeal against a decision by the Boksburg Town Council in 1956 declaring certain portions of the Asiatic Bazaar No. 2 area a slum, was upheld by the Transvaal Division of the Supreme Court, Pretoria. The same report noted that a certain Mr T Pillay of Boksburg was charged in April 1957 with contravening three sections of the Slums Act of 1934, and was convicted, cautioned, and discharged, and that the court set aside the conviction. The reason for this decision was that the hearing of this Slums Court was not properly conducted.[53] It is noteworthy that Adv BJ Vorster was reported as one of six legal experts (including advocate L Lawrence, and the attorneys B Hertztberg, I Kramer and MB Massel)

who appeared for Mr Pillay at the Slums Court and the Magistrate's Court, while advocate DO Vermoten appeared for the prosecution. It is interesting that a future conservative National Party Prime Minister represented Mr Pillay against a decision of the Slums Court, which used the Slums Act of 1934 to evict mostly people of colour.[54] In this context it could be argued that the Slums Act of 1934 was a precursor to the Group Areas Act.[55]

The researcher Noor Nieftagodien considers two pieces of legislation, at the time specifically directed at Indians, the so-called 'Pegging Acts', as the principal legislative precursors to the Group Areas Act of 1950. These Acts were The Trading and Occupation Land (Transvaal and Natal) Restriction Act of 1943, which forbade changes in ownership between Indians and Whites without ministerial permission, and the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946, which allowed for the identification of land for Indian occupation outside of which they could not acquire or occupy property. The Land Tenure Advisory Board (LTAB) was established to, *inter alia*, enforce these laws.[56]

On 5 March 1965 the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* reported that the Town Council of Boksburg gave notice for the demolition of the eleven shops in the Asiatic Bazaar No. 2 (Kalamazoo). In contrast to previous descriptions by said paper of the area as a "slum", it described it as "an area of small shops, dark alleys, and an overpowering smell of exotic spices" and "an area that was once one of the most colourful hustling and bustling communities in Boksburg." The report also refers to "Mr M Kalidas, a tailor, who was born in the area and has lived there all his life, 41 years, who must now move to Actonville", and that this move will deny him access to Boksburg's mine compounds where most of his customers resided. "Another shop-owner facing a particular bleak future is Ah Tong, the only Chinese butcher in the bazaar. Where he will move to, he does not know, and with no proclaimed Group Area for Chinese, he feels that wherever he does settle will be only temporary."[57]

Kalamazoo remains a thorn in the side

When my family moved to Reiger Park in late 1965, Kalamazoo was still in existence. There were a few houses constructed from corrugated iron roof sheets. A madrassa, a Muslim school, was still operating. There were at least three retail outlets, two owned by Indians and one by Mr Ah Tong. These were the nearest retail outlets to our homes and we frequented them daily. We walked past them on our way to East Rand Railway Station. Those staying in Stirtonville and the other areas of Reiger Park used taxis and buses to get to the station. In the late 1980s, Reiger Park Technical High School (Reiger Park Secondary School Nr 2) was built adjacent to Kalamazoo.

Remnants of Kalamazoo still exist today, resembling one of the many informal settlements scattered across the urban landscape of South Africa. On 7 August 2020, the *Boksburg Advertiser* reported on protests against the disconnection of illegal electricity power connections in the Joe Slovo and Kalamazoo informal settlements. "Many residents of the two informal settlements complained that they have been staying in their respective areas for a long time. They have had many meetings with authorities and several memorandums were handed over during previous protests and meetings, but it has come to a point where they feel that no one is taking them seriously as nothing has changed so far."

Since 1903 the Asiatic Bazaar has been a thorn in the side of the authorities. More than a quarter of a century after the first democratic elections in 1994, Kalamazoo remains a 'problem' area. A new generation of 'informal' urban dwellers can but hope that the government will eventually unlock better opportunities for them and provide improved living conditions not far from their places of work (for those who do manage to find employment), public transport facilities, i.e., a working urban passenger rail network, and other amenities. The East Rand Railway Station, once a hub of activity, is now dilapidated and the commuter rail services so unreliable that only the most desperate still use it.

East Rand Railway Station, once a hub of activity is now dilapidated (CH Morden, 2021).

The church and residential areas that were not to be

From as early as 1904 the Boksburg Municipality and its White residents pursued numerous measures to deny the Coloured community their "place in the sun."[58] Only three incidents will be highlighted here: one in 1905, one in 1922 and one that played out between 1966 and 1968. In the first of these incidents the Rev Charles Phillips of the Congregational Church attempted to buy four stands in Leeuwpoort Street to build a church for the Coloured community. The following was reported:

> At one of two public meetings, held within four days, in early February 1905 the decision, against the wishes of the Boksburg Town Council, by the Land Department to reserve four stands to build a church for Coloured people conveyed to Rev Charles Phillips of the Congregational Church was discussed. The Mayor briefed the meeting that the Council at an early meeting held on 17 August 1904 refused to approve the plans of the church as submitted by the Rev Charles Phillips. The Council suggested to the Land Department that it would be more convenient for the people in question themselves if the church is to be built in the Location. The Under Secretary of Land informed the Boksburg Town Council on 8 December 1904 that the decision to reserve the stands had to be respected. In the Government Gazette of January 6, 1905 Stands 1456, 1457, and 1458 in Leeuwpoort Street, Boksburg, were reserved for the purpose of a Congregational Coloured Church and Mission.

> The public meeting adopted a resolution moved by Dr MacNeillie (President of the Ratepayers' Association) requesting the Town Council to object to the decision by the Land Department to grant the Stands for the said purpose and to reverse the decision. The meeting also requested the Mayor and Town Council to discuss their concerns directly with Lord Milner.[59]

There appears to have been no follow-up public reporting on what transpired subsequently with respect to this incident, but it seems that the municipality was successful in blocking the development, given the establishment of Stirtonville in 1908 and the forced relocation of all Black and Coloured residents to Stirtonville from December 1908 onwards.

The second incident was an application in 1922 by Mr RH Tatham for the establishment of a Coloured residential area on Farm Klipfontein No. 6. This area was along the present-day Cason Road, close to the industrial area Anderbolt. *The East Rand Express* reported in May 1922:

> The Finance and General Purposes Committee of the Town Council reported that an application was made to the Township Board by Mr RH Tatham for permission to establish a township on Farm Klipfontein No. 6 for Coloured people. The Committee recommended that the Town Council strongly protest this proposal.
>
> The Mayor said that the 1 000 stands on which it was proposed to lay out a Coloured township might be secured by an undesirable class, and possibly the scum of the Reef would gather there. Such a situation would become intolerable, and the application should be squashed immediately.
>
> Mr W Pearce had been given to understand that only respectable dwellings would be erected which would house the elite of the coloured races. Yet he would oppose any granting of the application.
>
> The idea of a private individual securing 1 000 stands on which to lay out a coloured township was preposterous according to Mr JD Campbell. The opposition to the application by the Town Council was carried unanimously.[60]

A subsequent report, printed in the local newspaper in June 1922, was of a public meeting where this proposal was discussed:

> Residents of Boksburg North gave every support to the public meeting held in the Masonic Hall on Tuesday evening, when they voiced their opposition to the proposal to establish a Coloured township on Farm Klipfontein No. 6. The Mayor, Mr Boris Melman, chaired the meeting, and was supported by the Town Clerk, Mr HJ Bennitt, and several members of the Council.
>
> The resolution that was unanimously carried read:
>
> "That this public meeting of citizens of Boksburg views with the gravest alarm the proposed establishment of a township for Coloured persons, closely adjoining the township of Boksburg North and in the midst of numerous holdings disposed of the Europeans, protest in the strongest possible terms against the said township being established."
>
> And the residents' desire to point out:
>
> That from past experience on several parts of the Witwatersrand this meeting is convinced that the establishment of such a township will provide a refuge for the undesirable elements from all parts of the Reef."[61]

A few months later, on 5 August 1922, the editorial of the local newspaper stated:

> We were led to understand that the proposed development has been dropped and that the Township Board would veto it. This was because of opposition from the Boksburg Town Council and the views expressed at a public meeting held in Boksburg North.
>
> … as the whole question of residential facilities for Coloured people is dealt with in the recent Local Government Commission's Report, and by

the Urban Areas Bill, which is before Parliament next session, it would be preposterous to create a private township of this kind at this stage.[62]

Two weeks later, on 19 August 1922 *The East Rand Express* reported under the heading "That Chameleon Township" that:

In the Provincial Gazette dated 16 August 1922 and in our advertising columns today, appears an innocent looking advertisement, published at the instance of the Secretary of the Townships Board, intimating that "in terms of Section Five of Act No. 33 of 1907, an application has been made by Ralph Heathcote Tatham for permission to lay out a township on a portion of the farm Klipfontein No. 6, District Boksburg". The application was for erven to be sold only to Europeans or persons of European descent.

The original proposal for the development of a township for Coloureds was opposed by the White people of Boksburg – a petition of protest was signed by some 1 200 Europeans.

With reference to those who opposed his original proposal for a Coloured Township in Boksburg Mr Tatham is quoted to have written in the "Star" of July 18, 1922: "The fool, that is what the European is in this country. He will reap the whirlwind. For what is the result of the refusal to which I have referred. It is that I am now busily engaged in devising means of outwitting the opposition in question; and circumventing the present iniquity which prevents a native buying land as a home for himself on the Rand. And I think I shall succeed."

The East Rand Express continued:

There may be, and we frankly confess there is, much unreasonable, dangerous and ignorant opposition to schemes which seek to provide an outlet for the reasonable aspirations of our Coloured and Native peoples. But we do not despair of an ultimate solution.

No individual's idiosyncrasies, however exalted his intentions, can be allowed to thwart the will and conscience of the people. We hope and believe that the good sense and conscience of the people will evolve, through public channels and by legislative process, a solution of this age-long problem of the status of Native and Coloured subjects. Our reputation and standing in the comity of nations demand it.[63]

The "final report" on this incident appeared on 26 August 1922 in *The East Rand Express* under the heading "The Heathcote Township":

An amended application in respect of the proposed Heathcote Township was discussed by the Boksburg Town Council, as forwarded by the Townships Board. The Council decided there was no necessity for such a township and therefore opposed the application. Amongst the reasons given included:

(c) The natural expansion of its area (residential areas in Boksburg) should be the sole concern of the local authority, so that such expansion when necessary may be in accordance with a definite plan or policy.

(e) The condition as to ownership of stands by Europeans or persons of European descent is not in accordance with the usual wording, and in this connection, attention is drawn to the promotor's threat in his press correspondence as to devising of a scheme whereby he would outwit the authorities.[64]

The Boksburg Town Council thus managed to thwart the development of this residential area.

Forty-four years later, in 1966 when the Group Areas Act – which formalised, reinforced and strengthened many of the residential segregations in place since the early 1900s – was implemented with much vigour, a third incident unfurled in the south-western part of Boksburg, on the border with its neighbouring towns, Elsburg and Germiston.

The controversy that has arisen this week over the Boksburg Town Council's supposed plans to develop an area on the Boksburg side of a spruit that separates Boksburg from Germiston and Elsburg into a Coloured township has caught municipal officials by surprise. "I don't know what these people are complaining about", said the Town Clerk Mr R Rudo Nell, on Wednesday.

Tempers flared in Elsburg and Tedstoneville (the tiny Germiston township adjacent to the site for the proposed Coloured township) when the Boksburg Town Council applied for the reservation of this land, about 102 1/3 morgen in extent, for a Coloured township in accordance with Boksburg's requirements to provide land for the settlement of East Rand Coloureds in terms of the Group Areas Act.

Cllr Willie Strauss, deputy chairman of the Germiston Management Committee, said that when the Boksburg Town Council was approached about the possibility of declaring a Coloured township bordering on Germiston and Elsburg an assurance was given that the project would not come into being. "If, however, it becomes a reality, I will fight with everything I've got", he said.

Mr Nell said that the Germiston delegation had simply been told that application for the land for township purposes has been made. No mention was made of the land being used for an extension of Boksburg's Coloured townships. Mr Nell said that the Council did not even know what land would, in fact, be reserved for this development project as the ERPM had opposed its application for it also needed to expand.

The Town Clerk of Elsburg, Mr PEJ Van der Merwe, said this week, "I cannot see that it can become a reality as it is in direct conflict with the Government's policy of separate development." Mr Nell answered by saying that it all depended on what the Government's policy was. "That particular area has been declared a Group Area for Coloureds. I don't know what he (Mr Van der Merwe) refers to."

Mr Van der Merwe said, "We must nip this in the bud before anything serious develops. There fortunately is enough time to object."

It is understood that accommodation for about 600 families is being planned, but it is also understood that on a site that size, about 1 000 families could be accommodated.

Mrs JS Potgieter, of Tedstoneville, was extremely distressed when our reporter told her of the proposed township which is a matter of 500 ft. from her front door. Mrs MJ Harris of Egret Street, Tedstoneville, said that she and her husband had been living in the township for nearly four years and are now thinking of selling. Another distraught resident of Tedstoneville was Mrs JH Coetzee who said she and her husband are also seriously thinking of selling and returning to Klerksdorp, where they lived before.

Mrs EJ Fourie of Elsburg Road, Germiston, said, "It will not be a good thing for the whites. I respect them (the Coloureds) in their own place, but not so near the white residential area."[65]

This proposed development came to naught. Two years later, in 1968, new plans were proposed for this area. The Boksburg newspaper reported on the matter:

At the Council meeting last week, councillors agreed to the establishment of an industrial and white residential area on the borders of the Coloured township. This is a project visualised by a private company.

The area in question is situated between the new Elsburg Road and the Germiston and Elsburg boundaries. The ground was originally intended for the extension of the Coloured township, a scheme to which the municipality of Germiston and Elsburg objected.

This proposed extension was rejected by the Group Areas Board, which was reluctant to grant anymore land for this purpose. Just over two months ago this board issued an official map of

The entrance to Reiger Park from East Rand Station (CH Morden, 2021).

the Coloured area, excluding this ground.

The estate company, following the collapse of the original plan, approached the Council with several alternate suggestions, including one that the Council purchases the ground from the company at a fair present-day price.

Alternative schemes which they offered were the establishment of a white residential area; an industrial township with or without reservation for Coloured labour only; and a white residential township with an industrial area separating it from the existing Coloured township.

Cllr APU Scribante suggested that if the industrial and housing complex were established, an additional provision must be made for an extra buffer strip of park to be introduced between the industrial and residential area. "We don't want a repeat of the position in Lilianton, where there are houses on the one side of the road and industries on the other", he said.

Boksburg Town Clerk, Mr P Rudo Nell, said that the scheme is in the interest of the town which had industrially been brought to a standstill by the law (The Physical Planning and Utilisation of Resources Act, No. 88 of 1967) stating that no further African labour may be employed by Industries in Boksburg. Not even established industries could contemplate expansion because of this.[66]

The new industrial area will, however, draw upon Coloured and Asiatic labour, and will be situated in such a position as to make it a convenient place of work for both Coloured and White employees. Mr Sinclair, director of the company that intends to develop the project, said that the project is still very much in the initial stages and must be passed by the Department of Planning. "We will, however, set the ball rolling as soon as possible, but it may take anything from two to five years for any concrete progress to be made", he said.[67]

In the early 1990s an informal settlement developed on this piece of land and today, forming part of the greater Reiger Park, it is called Ramaphosaville.

2

Other East Rand towns

Benoni at a glance

Benoni's beginnings date back to 1881 when the Surveyor-general, Johan Rissik, named an unclaimed piece of state property *(uitvalgrond)* surrounded by four farms, Farm Benoni. The four farms were Modderfontein, Vlakfontein, Rietfontein and Kleinfontein. Afrikaner families farmed around the Blesbokspruit and the many pans, springs and rolling grasslands of the area. In September 1887 gold was discovered on Farm Benoni and Cornish men established the Chimes Mine.

Following the discovery of gold people from all parts of the globe arrived in the area, staking claims and hoping for that big strike. Most were British and many came from the Kimberley diamond mines. Others came from further afield, from the earlier gold rushes such as the Klondike in Canada, California in the USA, Australia, and from the declining goldmines in the Eastern and Northern Transvaal.

After the Second Anglo-Boer War Sir George Farrar planned and laid out Benoni town in 1903-4 and the first plots were sold off by the Kleinfontein Estates and Township Company. When local government status was granted to the Benoni area a Health Board was established in 1906. This was shortly followed by the establishment of four voting wards and elections for the first Town Council of Benoni on 30 November 1907.

The Modderfontein Gold Mining Company (GMC) was established in 1888, re-launched as New Modderfontein in 1895 and operated successfully until 1952, when mining ceased. The Modderfontein B, Modderfontein Deep Levels and the Modderfontein East GMCs were established in 1895, 1899 and 1917 respectively, and all proved very successful. The Modderfontein Deep Levels was known as 'The jewel-box of the Rand' during its heyday. All these mines were closed by 1962. The Van Ryn Estates GMC established in 1887 on the Vlakfontein farm was subdivided in 1894, but was soon thereafter re-combined and became successful until its closure in 1962.

The New Kleinfontein GMC mine was formed in 1902 by the Gold Mining and Exploration Syndicate Ltd. This was headed by Farrar with Anglo-French Exploration Company backing. The company introduced dynamic, large-scale deep-mining capabilities that proved to be successful. This mine swallowed up many of the claims of smaller concerns such as the Orient, Chimes West, Kleinfontein, Apex and Benoni Consolidated. In 1931 George McKenzie bought what was left of the mine and after some reorganisation and realising a considerable profit, operated it until its final closure in 1964. It was the last mining company to close in Benoni.

The Van Ryn Deep GMC was formed in 1902 and had considerable ups and downs. It closed due to labour shortages in 1907 when the Chinese labourers were repatriated, then amalgamated with the Kleinfontein Deep in 1908 which subsequently also closed. It restarted operations in 1913 and was successfully operated until its final closure in 1945.[1]

The locations of Benoni

In the early days of the gold mining rush a location was established on land between the Benoni Hotel and the Chimes Mine around 1902, but soon became overcrowded. Many people of colour not employed by the mines also took up residence there. Poor sanitation and hygiene conditions led to the inhabitants suffering from many diseases. Indians from Natal also settled around the area and set up trade supplying the location.

The Health Board, who initially administered the new Town of Benoni, tried to eradicate diseases such as enteric fever, that were rife in the slums and locations on mine properties. The Town Council of Benoni, which replaced the Health Board, had difficulty in obtaining land for industrial development and to house people of colour. They finally managed to obtain 'surface rights' to a portion of the Benoni farm. The 'first official' location, the Old Benoni Location, also referred to as the Benoni Bantu Location and later to be named Actonville, was established in February 1912.[2] In the late 1940s 123 sub-economic houses were built for Black people in Wattville, adjacent to Actonville.

Despite many restrictions and not the best living conditions for many, the residents of Benoni location managed to create a semblance of social life in the 1920s, with some actively challenging the liquor laws of the day (see the sidebar for a glimpse of those times).

The Location Rumpus
Five Natives Shot; One Dead

Constable Scully, who was on patrol duty at 12.30 a.m. on Sunday, was called to a disturbance at one of the stands in Benoni Location. He managed to collect three other constables, two Native policemen, and three Native detectives on the way.

On entering the yard five paraffin tins, three barrels, and one large drum were found, all full of skokian, about 80 gallons in all. Samples were taken, and the remainder destroyed. Upon leaving one of the rooms on the premises the police were confronted by a large crowd and an altercation pursued. At some point the police fired live ammunition and managed to escape from the area. Reinforcements were called in.

George William, a Cape Coloured (unemployed), was shot through the chest. He was one of the ringleaders and is said to have had an open razor in his hand when attacking the police, which was found on the ground beside the body.

Richard, a Congela, was shot through the abdomen, and removed to the hospital. Enoch, a Native with no pass, was shot through the stomach (he died in hospital); Freddie Evavasa (unemployed), had a gunshot wound in the forearm, and John Makya, a man with no pass, was wounded and admitted to Boksburg hospital.[3]

In 1967 the local newspaper observed: "The Coloured community from Benoni was, prior to July 1964, administered by the Department of Bantu Administration, Benoni. The majority of Coloured families were resident in the Coloured Township of Actonville and the Benoni Coloured Section. A percentage of these families were house owners but not stand owners. The stands were leased from the Council on a monthly basis. Other families rented Council houses or lodged with families."[4]

As the mines in the Benoni area started to close between 1945 and 1964, those families who lived in the vicinity of the mines had to find both alternative work as well as alternative accommodation. Many had to find shelter in the already overcrowded location in Benoni and locations elsewhere. Some families of colour found accommodation also in the backyards of the 'White' areas in town. An area of 'White' Benoni, referred to as Syrian Town, became a place of refuge for many such families. They invariably had to live in cramped conditions, pay exorbitant rents and endure an uncertain stay. According to Noor Nieftagodien numerous Coloured families began occupying rooms and shacks in the White areas of Benoni and the Council was deeply concerned by this influx of Coloured people into white suburbs.[5]

The reference to Syrian Town is probably an area in Benoni mostly inhabited by people of Lebanese descent. In a different but similar context, on seeing a few Lebanese businessmen at the Ambassador Hotel in Ghana soon after his family's arrival in 1961, the British journalist George Alagiah made the following observation: "They are the deal-makers, the buyers and sellers – the people who know how to make serious money in Africa. In *Heart of the Matter*, Graham Greene called them the Syrians."[6]

Uncle Tienie du Preez, in his informal memoir, "Long Letter" – see Chapter 13 – also makes reference to the "Syrians" and how one of the Fosters in the Coloured section of the Benoni Location had to travel to Kimberley, the nearest town in which was then known as the Cape Province, to marry a "Syrian" woman because there such unions were legally permissible.

One of the more well-known families from Lebanese descent that stayed in Benoni was the legendary boxing family, the Toweels. Victor Anthony Toweel was born on 12 January 1928 in Benoni. He was the second eldest of six brothers and the son of Michael Joseph Toweel. Victor Toweel's father, better known as Pappa Mike, taught his sons Jimmy, Victor, Fraser, Willie and Allan the basic rudiments of boxing and forged a family legacy in a makeshift corrugated iron gymnasium in the backyard of his home in Benoni.[7] According to Uncle Tienie, the Toweels were regular visitors to the Old Benoni Location.

The first Lebanese immigrants arrived in South Africa around 1896. The majority of them were Maronite and they wrote to the Maronite Patriarch, requesting a Maronite priest to come to South Africa. The classification of the Lebanese community as 'White' in South Africa was affirmed in 1913, when Moses Gandur, a Maronite from Syria, sued the South African government, as he was initially denied the right to purchase land in Johannesburg being classified as 'non-White'. Gandur's lawyers successfully argued that because Lebanese and Syrians originated from Canaan, the birthplace of Christianity and Judaism, they could not be discriminated against under South Africa's race laws. Subsequently, immigration from Lebanon and Syria was restricted.[8]

Nieftagodien discusses in some depth some of the socio-political developments in the locations of Benoni during the 1950s. He makes reference to the time when the municipality decided to close the tennis courts in the location because they were being utilised by mixed teams and in reaction PR Deeva, Johnny de Jager and Dennis Brutus "organised a campaign to expose the municipality's racism".[9]

Another incident he shares was when racial conflict nearly erupted in the Benoni locations.

Uncle Tienie also refers to this incident in his "Long Letter". The lead up to this incident was the perceived unfair competition that black taxi owners experienced vis-à-vis their more business savvy Indian counterparts. "In 1951 a dispute erupted over the question of Indian domination of the local taxi industry. On 16 April 1951 African taxi owners reportedly demanded that Indians relinquish their licences to those African taxi owners who were refused licences by the Transportation Board. The Indian taxi owners refused to concede and at a subsequent meeting it was decided to call a boycott of Indian-owned taxis.

In July 1952 Benoni Old Location was engulfed by what became known locally as the 'Korean War'. On 4 July an Indian shop-owner, Faizel, beat to death a young African boy who he accused of stealing from his shop. After the funeral, a group of Black youth marched to the Indian section where they proceeded to attack businesses. Some feared Benoni might witness a repeat of the devastating so-called 'race riots' in Durban in 1949. The turning point in the crisis occurred when a local Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) leader, PR Deeva, convinced the leader of the Basotho gang (the 'Russians' or maRashea) to protect the Indian section from the attacks."[10]

On 26 September 1951 the first Coloured Advisory Committee (CAC) was elected, consisting of G Carr, P de Jager, A Jansen, W Pietersen, Bob Triegaardt, and P York. The CAC lobbied that Coloured businessmen be given preferential treatment in Coloured areas, reflecting the same concern that African entrepreneurs had about Indian businessmen's monopoly of commerce in the location.[11]

By the early 1950s the Benoni Old Location had become seriously overcrowded and slum conditions were rapidly developing in the Coloured section, where at least 2 662 people were crammed into only 370 houses. The Benoni Town Council did not respond favourably to the appeals by the CAC to address this problem and made only half-hearted attempts to do so.[12]

The Coloured Vigilance Association was especially successful in lobbying for accommodation to those people who lived in a notoriously insalubrious section of the Indian Section, called Rooiyard. In 1956 hundreds of African, Coloured and Indian people marched to the Benoni Town Hall to submit a petition opposing the demolition of shacks and houses in the 'Asiatic Bazaar'.[13]

On the political front Nieftagodien refers to "a small group of radicals" within the Coloured community that had been active in Benoni during the 1950s:

> At the centre stood Mary Moodley, a Congress stalwart, and the De Jager brothers (Derek and John), who began their political careers in the non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). In the late 1950s these young militants successfully challenged the moderates for the leadership of CAC. John de Jager had also been a member of the Society of Young Africans (SOYA) while a student at the University of the Witwatersrand. From the mid-1950s they had become increasingly disillusioned with the sectarian politics of the NEUM and decided to place their energies in the Congress Movement.[14]

William Hills High School

Workers and their families initially settled in makeshift residential areas close to the mines in Benoni. Schools were started in some of these mining 'residential areas'. One such school for Coloureds was started in 1905. Originally the Benoni Eurafrica School developed and grew into three schools, namely the Benoni Coloured Primary, the Benoni Indian Primary, and the William Hills High School. In 1934 Mr MHC Jansen was appointed principal of the High School and his brother, Mr AS Jansen, the vice principal. By 1953 William Hills High School had 400 pupils, some travelling from as far as Nigel to the east and Kliptown to the west.[15]

Coloured Scholars
Appalling Educational Conditions Shock Board
Remedial steps to be taken forthwith

When the East Rand School Board visited the Coloured (and Indian) schools in the Old Benoni location in April 1946 they found conditions less than satisfactory. At the Congregational Church 95 children were being taught in a room no bigger than a board room and there were only two toilets. Two teachers were conducting two classes in this one room, the classes facing opposite directions. At the English (Anglican) Coloured Church there were 85 children, it was very hot, and there was no water. Children had to walk three blocks for water. The main Coloured School was very dilapidated. In the hall three classes were being held at the same time: on the Platform, in the Centre, and at the back of the hall. Thereafter they went to William Hills Junior High School where the conditions were much better.

At a meeting of the School Board it was proposed that pupils of the Junior High School be moved to the ex-Benoni Junior School and that the Primary School were to move to the "present" William Hills School building at the location. Major Griffiths said that holding classes for Coloured children in the old Benoni Junior School would be met with a lot of opposition from the European community. Mr Hills said that "in the name of humanity the present was an intolerable state of affairs that could not continue, and as a matter of conscience corrective action must be taken". A motion that the William Hills School be temporarily transferred to the old Junior School, at present occupied by the military, and the Coloured primary school be transferred to the William Hills School, was carried by eight votes to two. The Rev HA Sondenbergh and Major Griffiths formed the minority. Members of the School Board include Mr N Kirschner, Mrs GF Brammer, chairman, and Mr SJ Thomas.[16]

William Hills Junior High School held an essay competition in April 1946. Mr Jansen, the school principal, said such events encourage the children in the art of self-expression and initiative.[17] The competition was divided into two sections: for Standards II to IV the topic was "What I would like to be after I leave school" and for Standards V to VIII the topic was "My choice of career". The winners were Edith Joseph (Std III); Lawrence Henry (Std VI); Douglas Courtriers (Std VIII) and Mavis Hood (Std VIII). Douglas Courtriers's ambition was to become a business manager, Mavis Hood said she would like to become a teacher, Lawrence Henry a medical doctor and Edith Joseph a teacher.

A similar English essay competition was held at William Hills High School in February 1955. In the Standards IX and X section Roland Jennings obtained the first prize and Pamela Haupt came second. Special mention was made of Joan Goliath, B Theron, and D Ryibilingum. In the Standards VII and VIII section Gosai Kanjee came first and Ellen Rygaardt second. Special mention was made of Aaron Michael, Noor Osman, Premilla Singh, Akbar Ismail, John Browne and Freddy Scheepers. In Standard VI Isdean Kaldine came first and Amrittal Dass second; worthy of special mention were Abdul Raschild, and Tagel and Vadoeli Poonsammy. Mr Hills, 'champion' for Coloured education on the East Rand after whom the school was named, a member of the East Rand School Board for over 30 years and chairman for a number of years, attended the prize-giving ceremony.[18]

In September 1959 William Hills High School bade farewell to the previous Secretary of the East Rand School Board, Mr CH Chatterton, who had served on the board for 25 years. He became secretary of the board in 1934. William Hills High School was 'officially' opened in 1944. It was, however, only in 1953 that William Hills High gained full status as a high school. There were also Modder B and Modderfontein Coloured schools. Mr GL Carr, principal of William Hills High School and convener of the function, said that under Mr Chatterton's

Prof Ismail Mohamed

A remarkable individual who taught for a short while at William Hills High, and married a Benoni local, is Mr Ismail Mohamed. He was born on 27 July 1930 in Barkly East, in the Eastern Cape and died on 6 July 2013 in Johannesburg.

He started his schooling at St Joseph's Catholic School, where the classes were taught in English. As an Afrikaans speaker he had problems with the language, which led to him to fail his first examinations. His education suffered a further setback when he contracted a fever and was isolated in hospital for five months.[19]

After recovering from the fever, he attended the Eurafrican Training Centre, which was a five kilometre walk away from his home. He then went to a secondary school in Vrededorp, Johannesburg, graduating in 1949.

He obtained a BSc (Hons) in Mathematics at the University of Witwatersrand in 1954 and started teaching at William Hills High School in 1955. In 1957 he obtained an MSc and the next year left for London to study for a PhD at the University of London. He married Ellen Kathleen Rygaardt (b. 5 July 1938), one of his former students, in 1959.

In 1961 he obtained his PhD in Group Theory (Mathematics) from the University of London, and they returned to South Africa for a short period. Their first child, Elaine, was born in 1961 in London. Their other four children, born in South Africa, were Andrew, Jennifer, Ivor and Ingrid.

His mother played a significant role in influencing his involvement in politics. His work in the liberation movement began in earnest in his second year of university when his mother became an active member of the Garment Workers' Union.

Roseinnes Phahle, a close friend, had this to say about him: "His most outstanding characteristic was his two passions: pursuit of research in mathematics and a striving throughout his life to be present and active at the coalface of the struggle for the national liberation of South Africa … I do not personally know of a more devout foot soldier, not a mere talker but a utmost walker of the talk, of our struggle for freedom."[20] Prof Ismail Mohamed was awarded, posthumously, the Order of Mapungubwe in Silver in 2014.[21]

care there had been phenomenal development in Coloured and Indian education. Mr RJ Triegaardt, doyen of the Coloured teaching profession on the Reef, stressed the personal interest that Mr Chatterton has always taken in the various school staff members.

Germiston at a glance

Germiston was founded in 1886 and was at the centre of what was the Rand goldfields. Two farmers, John Jack and August Simmer, struck gold around 1887 on a farm known as Elandsfontein. Jack called the place Germiston after his childhood home on the farm of Germiston near Glasgow. Germiston officially became a town in 1903 and a city in 1950. It is part of South Africa's most heavily industrialised areas. Gold bullion from nearly all the country's mines is recovered at the Rand Refinery Limited, established in 1921, the largest in the world. Germiston is the largest railway junction in South Africa and has substantial rail repair shops.[22]

Germiston's locations

The Germiston Native Location was established around the end of the 1890s or early 1900s, as in November 1910 the Germiston Town Council proposed taking full control of the Native Location and also to establish an Asiatic section adjacent to the Native section. As a rule at the time, all East Rand towns also included a small section for Coloureds. During the debate Cllr McMenamin argued that the Council should first obtain all rights in the Location, as at the time Rand Mines was the owner of both surface and mining rights.

The main road to Elsburg and Klippoortjie bordered the Location, and for that reason the Council, some years before, passed a resolution that the Location should be moved. Cllr McMenamin said:

> If the Location and the Bazaar were placed close together as suggested, it would mean that Asiatics would do all the trade. One of the most cherished policies of this community was to prevent Asiatics

William Hills High staff in the 1950s.
Front row: Edith Henry (Ehrenreich), Ms Arends, Alec Jansen, Frank Jacobs, Mabel Jansen and Ms Rosenburg (Smith). Second row: Charles Goliath, [?], Nanette Burns, Alec Jooste, Marthinus Jansen (principal), Kallie van der Haer, Catherine Burns, Martin Ehrenreich and Cecil du Preez. Back row: Manwell Felix, [?], [?], Andrew Sampson, [?], Arthur Hobbs, Louis Clarke, and Robert Triegaardt.

Rev Clive McBride

Clive Sydney McBride was "born [1934] and brought up in the tough social and political climate of the Transvaal mining town of Benoni, [and] received his education at the town's William Hills High School."[23] Along with like-minded friends in Johannesburg, he formed a political discussion group in the early 1950s, called The Inner Circle, initially aimed at "coloured upliftment".[24] An outspoken critic of the previous government, he trained as an Anglican priest at the Bishop Gray Theological College in Cape Town. He was made deacon in 1958 and priest in 1959. He was 38 years old at the time the journalist Al J Venter interviewed him in 1972 for his book *Coloured, A profile of two million South Africans*.

McBride was an adherent of the Black Consciousness Movement and was at one stage known as 'The Fighting Priest'. Due to his political activities he was held in detention without trial and on occasion the government refused to issue him with a passport. Rev McBride served in parishes on the Cape Flats at Kensington and Factreton from the 1960s to the 1980s, while also being involved in the Windermere and Elsies River communities during the 1970s. He later became chaplain to Valkenberg and Lentegeur Psychiatric Hospitals. He was later recognised as Honorary Canon of the Diocese of Cape Town. He died on 24 June 2022.

> trading here, and yet the Health Committee's proposition not only defeated this policy but absolutely reversed it. If an Asiatic Bazaar were established, it would mean a big influx of Indians here, and many have already come to the district since the proposition to establish a Bazaar was being discussed.[25]

He noted that the local magistrate fined a certain Mr Kalla Singh for trading in the Location, but on appeal the decision was dismissed. The consequence of this case was "that as presently constituted the Council had no Native Location as understood by law".

Cllr McMenamin proposed that the Council not establish an Asiatic Bazaar, but if one had to be established, the Council should "postpone it for as long as possible and then place it where it would do least harm to the general public". Cllr White said that Cllr McMenamin's proposition was only putting off the inevitable and that he was ill-advised with regard to the Asiatic question. Did he think any "Government would allow them to be the only town to keep out Asiatics"? The motion by Cllr McMenamin was defeated by nine votes to seven.[26]

In December 1910 the Secretary of the Elsburg Health Board wrote to the Germiston Municipality protesting against the extension of the Germiston Location, arguing:

> inasmuch as it is a disgrace to the town and Council, being on the main road to Elsburg and beyond, as it can be proved that ladies can hardly venture to travel to Germiston on account of the indecency and filthy habits of natives, besides the insanitary state of the spruit where washing is carried on, and should an epidemic break out both Germiston and Elsburg would suffer materially.

Elsburg requested that the Germiston Council should "take immediate steps to remove the location to a more distant spot from European residence and suggested the hill between the spruit and at the location and the Boksburg Main Road as a very suitable place, where they cannot be a nuisance to the travelling public, besides being some distance away from Europeans."[27]

On 6 September 1910 Rand Mines submitted a draft agreement to the Germiston Council regarding the sale of the land on which the Native Location was situated. This agreement was deemed not acceptable to the Council. In October 1911 the Germiston Municipality announced that it would take control of the Native Location. The Public Health Committee proposed the following:

a) That the triangular portion of the location, consisting of claim ground held by the Simmer Deep Ltd., in extent 4 morgen 302 square roods, should be vacated. The rent paid for this portion is £553 6s. 8d. per annum. The number of huts on this portion is 37;
b) The balance of the area, 58 morgen 11 square roods, de-proclaimed portion of the farm Driefontein, property of the Rand Mines Deep Ltd., was occupied by Asiatics and Natives; of this portion it was proposed that the area, excluding the portion Coloured on the plan submitted, shall be proclaimed as the Germiston Municipal Native Location; and…
g) … a resolution in terms of Section 3 of the Native Location Regulation called upon all Natives within the jurisdiction of the municipality not living upon the premises of their European employers to reside within the location.

By following the procedure as proposed the Native Location would have been clearly defined and it would consequently enable the Council to enforce the Native Location By-Laws. However, trading rights for Indians remained an issue.[28]

According to a census the total population of Germiston in April 1911 was 53 570:[29]

A letter from the Indian community of Germiston, 'as received'

A general meeting of Indians residing at Germiston was held at the Temple Premises on Sunday 1 October 1911. Amongst those present were Messrs Lalbahadoor Singh, Bahoo Hazura Singh, Chengrayan Moodaly, Bunthoo, Ramlall Singh, Surfoodeen, V Appasamy Padyachi, Alibux, Sam Francis, Sooboo Naidoo, Subrail Naidoo, V Pathr, AG Naidoo, Ramdayal Singh, Mackan Singh, Tilokee Singh, Ebrahim Adam, Ali Omar, Hansji Morar, Bawaji Goolabdassji, Ramdaran Mungary, Jungbahadoor, and many others.

Mr Lalbahadoor Singh was voted to the chair. At issue was a Final notice that Indians have received from the Germiston Municipality asking them to vacate the stands they occupied by 31 October 1911. He mentioned that they obtained legal advice on the matter and are confident that they would succeed in the Court of Justice. He asked where they should go to. We have built houses on the stands worth £200 to £500, and if we were to submit, it means a practical ruin to the Standholders. Therefore, I ask you to stand firm and fight the case out to the bitter end.

Mr R Lugunberthy mentioned that he was present when the legal opinion was obtained and that they also travelled to Tolstoy Farm to consult "our Grand Leader" Mr MK Gandhi who also assured us that we will succeed in the Court of Justice and our interest is being safe-guarded under Act 3 of 1885, and if we fail we can use the harmless weapon called "Passive Resistance". I now suggest that you all form an Association to safe-guard your interest.

The Germiston Indian Association was formed with Mr Lalbahadoor Singh as Chairman, Chengrayan Moodaly as Vice Chairman, Baboo Hazura Singh as Secretary and Treasurer, and Mr R Lugunberthy as Bookkeeper.[30]

Europeans	15 323
Natives	36 628
Coloureds	824
Asiatics	795
Total	**53 570**

Illustrating the significance of schools in the area at the time, *The East Rand Express* reported on the Germiston Indian School's second annual prize-giving ceremony in December 1923. Mrs BE Riley, wife of the chairman of the Germiston High School governing body, presented the awards to the scholars. She was supported by Mr BE Riley, Mr Claude Riley, Miss Riley, Mr and Mrs HD Sutherns, Miss Stewart, Mr Ernest Maybery, and Mr and Mrs WP Oxenham. Mr BH Singh presided.

Mr Samuel Joseph, the principal of the school, stated that the school opened in 1921 as a private school for Indian children of the district, with some 50 boys and girls on the roll. The Education Department took over the school in October 1922, so that it had now merged into a Government school, with 113 scholars on the register. Funds were provided by the local Indians, of whom Mr BH Singh was the moving and guiding spirit. The inspector of schools, Mr Sutherns, also addressed the occasion. Mr BE Riley mentioned that the construction of a new school building was to commence soon and will be ready for occupation during the second term in 1924.

Mr Nash was the School Board secretary. Mr J Royeppen, BA, an Indian advocate, exhorted those in charge of the Indian children to lead them along the paths of truth and righteousness, honesty, and purity, and to accept the responsibility of founding the future welfare of the Indian citizens of a great and glorious Empire, i.e., the British Empire.[31]

At a hearing of the Group Areas Board in Germiston in February 1961 it was revealed that 2 500 Indians and 3 000 Coloured people living in the Germiston Location "are to be cleared out of their homes under the Group Areas Act, but it is a mystery where they are to go".[32] The rumour was that all Indians on the East Rand, about 10 000 in total, were to move "into one ghetto in Benoni". Germiston's Asiatic Bazaar was established before 1905 and Indians were given to understand, six

years later when they were moved to a new site, that this would be their permanent home. Mr J Slovo, representing the Indian community, told the board: "The callous indifference shown by the municipality to the fate of the Indian community stems from an attitude that it is right and proper to approach the problem of race separation as if those who are non-white can have no claim to justice and equity. This attitude makes a mockery of the countless promises that the Act would be administered with fairness to all races". He continued: "We ask not for concessions, nor for an indulgence, but for our rights."[33]

Germiston's rapid economic expansion in the late 1930s and especially during the war made it a favourite destination for work seekers. As a result the town's location, Dukathole, experienced a population explosion earlier than other East Rand towns and by 1938 already had a population of 15 000.[34]

Springs

Springs was founded as a coal and gold mining town in 1904. About 1 840 farmers moved into the area and demarcated farms for themselves, especially after the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek became an independent republic with the signing of the Sand River Convention in 1852. The measurements of the borders of these farms were often inaccurate and later, when the correct borders of the farms had to be documented, there were several extra or odd pieces of land that did not belong to any farm. These odd pieces of land then became state property. Such an odd piece existed between three neighbouring farms on the Witwatersrand, namely Geduld (meaning 'patience'), De Rietfontein ('the reed fountain') and Brakpan (literally 'small, brackish lake'). The 685 ha odd piece was given the name "The Springs" by the land surveyor James Brooks, probably because of all the fountains on the land.

On 16 September 1884 the official map of The Springs was registered in Pretoria. The coal discovered in The Springs was of a good quality and in 1888 the first contract was signed to mine coal. Initially mining was on a small scale but grew when the Great Eastern mine was established. A number of corrugated iron houses were erected around the mine. This settlement grew and in 1902 a health committee was appointed to look after the buildings and location of structures and also the hygiene in the growing township. Gradually, especially after coal was discovered further east in Witbank, The Springs' collieries were closed. Following the discovery of gold in 1899 on the farm Geduld and the further discovery of the main reef in 1902, the Grootvlei Proprietary Mines was registered in 1904 and shafts were sunk.

In April 1904 "The Springs" was proclaimed a town called Springs, the health committee was replaced by a town council, and it flourished as a mining town. In 1962 Springs produced 10% of the country's gold and 9% of its uranium. By the end of the 1960s the last mine in town, the Daggafontein mine, ceased operations. The town then developed into an industrial centre. Today Springs is well known for its architecture: it has the second biggest collection of small-scale art deco buildings in the world, after Miami in Florida, USA.[35]

Springs' Native Location and Asiatic Bazaar

In May 1920 it was reported that the Springs Native Location, approximately 10 and a half morgen in size, was about 300 yards away from the nearest dwelling in the European township of Geduld. There was dissatisfaction among residents of Geduld because of the noise caused by Natives passing to and from the location, more especially during weekends when large numbers of people arrived by train to visit their friends in the location.

The total population of the location at the time was approximately 2 000. Between January and May 1920, 400 new applications were received by

the Location Superintendent, and 74 huts were awaiting ground upon which to be erected. The general layout of the location was bad and there was an urgent need for a much larger location site.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector, Mr Young, reported that a detailed survey had been done of each hut and room in the location. Of the 561 rooms used as sleeping rooms, 225 (40%) were deficient in airspace, 216 (38%) in floor space, and 543 (90%) in light. There were 940 persons occupying 225 sleeping rooms, where only 546 should have been permitted. In a total of 24 cases the surplus number of Natives occupying rooms as sleeping rooms in excess of the prescribed number was 77. There were also 282 animals housed, or rather kraaled.

The general sanitary conditions of the location were filthy and dangerous. The waste water was "invariably" thrown down onto yard surfaces and streets in an indiscriminate manner, and the refuse was dumped on the stand or on the street, "so that the conditions obtaining after a rainstorm can be more easily imagined than described".

The location was overcrowded to a serious extent, the buildings old and of very poor construction, and the sanitary conditions were appalling. The newspaper noted that "not admitting of any remedy save by the entire removal of the whole location to another larger and more distant site, the present site, filthy through years of defilement, and I would labour this point most strongly, forms a most favourable zone for the development of any epidemic, which, owing to its close proximity to the European township of Geduld, is also a constantly threatening danger to the health of the White community of this district".[36]

In January 1923 tenders were published for the construction of a new Springs Location and Asiatic Bazaar. The Location was to be situated on a piece of ground about 77 morgen in extent in the vicinity of the property on the New State Areas Ltd, above the Geduld township.

The Central Housing Board approved the scheme and £25 000 was loaned under the Housing Act for the construction of dwellings and other necessary buildings. Houses would cost from £96 to £155 and would be let on a monthly rental of not more than 30s. There were 1 800 stands measuring 30 x 30 feet set aside and ample provisions were to be made for "the influx of the large Coloured and Native population required for industrial and mining development".[37] It is not clear if this construction went ahead; if it did, it developed into what was later referred to as Payneville.

By 1952 the official figure for the African population of Payneville (the Location) stood at 33 000. A further 800 Coloured people were squeezed into a section of the location known as Cape Stands and approximately 1 000 Indians lived in the Asiatic Bazaar (Bakerton), which was separated from the location by a street.[38]

In 1952 the Springs Council wanted Payneville to retain its Coloured and African populations but the Group Areas Board (GAB) in 1957 recommended that the location be converted into group areas for Coloured and Indian people.

On 21 February 1964 the government officially proclaimed Springs a white 'group area'. Payneville and Bakerton were provisionally proclaimed as a 'controlled area', pending the eventual removal of their residents. Over the next decade Springs was left in limbo about its future. In May 1968 the GAB gave notice of its intention to proclaim Bakerton a Coloured 'group area'. The Springs municipality rejected the recommendation.

When Mrs Helen Suzman, the Opposition Member of Parliament, visited Payneville in the late 1970s she described it as "the worst slum in the Transvaal". "At that stage the terrible conditions in Payneville were threatening to become a serious political embarrassment for the government, which hastened the process of relocating Coloureds to the new Coloured 'group area', Geluksdal."[39]

Brakpan

Brakpan is sandwiched between Boksburg, Benoni and Springs. The area, named in 1886, grew rapidly after the discovery of coal in 1888 and gold in 1905. By the time of the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), Brakpan was home to South Africa's premier coal-producing pit. After the war, Brakpan expanded rapidly and, following much debate about being "tied to the apron-strings of Benoni", became independent from Benoni and formed its own municipality in 1919.[40]

When Brakpan was proclaimed a municipality in 1919, the Town Council was required to establish a location for black people. Mining companies were reluctant to make land available to the municipality next to the mines and it was only after the intervention by the 'central' government that land was secured to establish a location in 1927. The location inhabitants were mainly from the farms in Withok, Witpoortjie, Rand Collieries and also from mine locations in State Mines, Springs West, Brakpan Mines and Vlakfontein Mines. Others were from the Springs and Benoni locations.

Primary schooling was provided by missionary societies near the location and mine location schools in States Mines, Springs West, Brakpan Mines and the farm school in Withok. In the 1930s local churches, with state subsidies, provided schooling. Government-subsidised schools followed in 1940 and all church schools were combined into three schools. Brakpan Bantu High School was started in 1942 and was the second school on the East Rand for black pupils.

Despite Brakpan having had gold mines, it never attracted major investors in manufacturing and tertiary industries. The town's gold mine was violently occupied by White strikers during the 1922 Rand Rebellion. The Brakpan, Sallies, Van Dyk and States mines closed in 1963. "Since 1978 the recycling of the mine tailings at Brakpan (the largest such dump on the Witwatersrand) has resulted in the recovery of significant residual quantities of gold and uranium."[41]

Nigel

In 1882 a farmer named Petrus Johannes Marais, who owned the farm Varkensfontein in the Heidelberg district, made an agreement with a prospector named Johnstone allowing him to prospect for gold on his farm.. After having read the book *The Fortunes of Nigel* by Sir Walter Scott, a story about a young man who was the victim of dishonest intrigue but eventually achieved his goal in life, Marais declined an offer by Johnstone to buy the farm. In July 1888, two years after the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, Marais discovered gold on his farm. He attributed his luck to the novel he had been reading and called his company the Nigel Gold Mining Company. In this way the town of Nigel came into being.

In 1888 State President Paul Kruger declared Nigel as a public digging under notice No. 331, and the Sub-Nigel Mine was established. Nigel was little more than a mining camp until 1923, when control of the town was passed into the hands of a "Dorpvillage" (Village Council). The first meeting of the council was held on 2 January 1923. Within a space of seven years the local authority was given increased status and in 1930 was elevated to a Town Council. On 24 November 1930 the first meeting of the Town Council was held, and Mr CL Mackle was elected the first mayor.

The years 1934 to 1939 saw the most noteworthy development of the town. However, this was slowed down by the outbreak of World War II. The railway line between Springs, Nigel and Heidelberg was opened on 18 October 1935.[42]

Elsburg

Elsburg was laid out on the farm Klippoortjie in 1887 and proclaimed a town in 1908. It was named after the farm owner, FC Els. The area was administered by a health committee from 1908 and by a village council from 1938. Municipal status was achieved in October 1957.[43]

3

The housing crisis and increased political repression: 1946 to 1961

Following the devastations of World War II economies across the world entered a period of sustained economic recovery that lasted for more than two decades, until the early 1970s. A confluence of factors, during WWII and soon thereafter, triggered an era of political changes, including the independence of many ex-colonies, especially from Britain. The 'winds of change'were indeed blowing strongly across the British Colonial Empire.[1] First India and thereafter a number of African countries became independent between 1947 and the early 1960s. Ghana was the 'first' African country to gain its independence from Britain in 1957. South Africa was already an 'independent country' since the formation of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, following the Anglo-Boer War (1899 to 1902) and declared itself a Republic in 1961.

South Africa joined the economic expansion wave but the political climate in the country took a very different direction. The accession of the National Party led to a reinforcement of many of the racially discriminating practices that were already prevalent in the country, but with increased vigour, a lot more repression and degrees of 'pettiness' that left many dumbfounded and the dignity of many in tatters. George Bizos, a prominent lawyer, articulated the ambivalence of the liberal White political party at the time as follows: "The United Party opposed the replacement of the segregationist status quo with codified racial discrimination, but were not in favour of equal rights, conceding only reluctantly the need for some form of future qualified franchise for black people."[2]

A growing economy and increased mechanisation on farms encouraged many people to migrate to the cities. While many mines on the East Rand began to scale back or even close during this period, a few continued to expand. This time it was the growth of the manufacturing sector that attracted more workers.[3] With an increase in the rate of urbanisation, there was increased pressure on the available housing and other social infrastructures. By the end of 1946 the Medical Health Officer of Boksburg informed the Boksburg Town Council that there were 200 'European' families on the housing waiting list.

> These families now live in outhouses, garages and other structures which would normally not even have been occupied by Natives. Cases have come to notice where European families live next to Natives with no bathroom or satisfactory sanitary arrangements. At the same time a large number of Natives are flocking to the town on the Reef, having heard of good prospects of earning in a few days an amount that might take months to earn on a farm. Consequently, there is a large amount of overcrowding in the location.[4]

In an attempt to help address the housing shortage the Boksburg Town Council approached ERPM in August 1948 to hire half of the Driefontein Compound for use by single Natives living in the Stirtonville location.[5] In the meantime, the close to 600 families living in the 600 single rooms in the sub-economic section of Stirtonville added 'unauthorised structures' to their rooms in order to provide some relief for the extreme overcrowding. The council decided to take action against the 'offenders', but agreed to make some limited concessions to these 'unfortunate families'. "The occupants of the single quarters should be permitted to erect enclosures adjoining their rooms with non-flammable walls and a roof not exceeding the width of the room, 5 feet deep and 5 feet 6 inches with a roof not to exceed one half the area of the enclosure."[6]

In 1953 an appeal by Mr Stefaans Niekerk, a Coloured man, of the refusal for the renewal of his permit by the local Superintendent, Mr Arthur Emil Karl Wenski, to stay in Stirtonville was upheld by the Native Commissioner's office in Boksburg. Mr Niekerk was refused a permit in 1951 following an earlier decision by the Council to grant no further permits to Coloured people to stay in the area. Mr Niekerk, originally from Mozambique, gave up his Coloured certificate and registered as a Native in order to stay and be given permission to continue his local hawking. Mr Wenski warned him in 1952 that he would not renew the permit for 1953. However, he continued to live in the location without a permit. "I consider him not to be a fit and proper person because he changes his race classification to suit his propose", Mr Wenski said. Mr Niekerk said he had lived in Stirtonville since 1939 and bought a house in 1951. Mr HA Ranwell, Native Commissioner for the Germiston-Boksburg area, appeared for the respondent, and Mr Kentridge appeared for the appellant.[7]

Stirtonville and the adjacent Asiatic Bazaar No. 1 were home to all people of colour: Black, Coloured, Indian and Chinese. The following incident that took place in 1953 indicates how some of the absurd laws impacted the residents of Stirtonville:

> Hugh Bongh, a 30-year old Chinese shop assistant, residing at 204 5th Street, Stirtonville location, was fined £50 for being in possession of liquor without a permit and a further £10 for being in possession of 8lbs of sprout grain of the type used for brewing kaffir beer. He pleaded guilty. As an Asiatic he may not be supplied with or found in possession of liquor in terms of the Liquor Act.[8]

Locations for Black and Coloured people, with adjacent Asiatics Bazaars (mostly for Indian, but also for Chinese people) developed from the late 1890s and early 1900s in Boksburg (Stirtonville), Germiston (Dukathole), Benoni (Benoni Old Location), Springs (Payneville) and later on also in Brakpan and Nigel. In the case of Springs, the Asiatic Bazaar (Bakerton) was somewhat further from the 'Native' location compared to those in the other towns. Germiston's rapid economic expansion in the late thirties and especially during the war led to the town's location, Dukathole, experiencing a population explosion earlier than other East Rand towns. Stirtonville experienced its population explosion in the forties when Boksburg's industrial expansion gathered pace. Overcrowding in the Benoni Old Location (including Park Town) spilled over to the neighbouring Asiatic Section. Rack-

renting became a relatively lucrative source of income for landlords from the location and the Asiatic section.[9]

By the early 1950s the National Party started formulating policies and plans for the implantation of 'grand apartheid', with the subsequent Group Areas Act at the heart thereof. The Nel Commission was appointed in 1952 to investigate the siting of Black locations in Pretoria. This was followed by the appointment of the Mentz Committee, later the same year, to "investigate the question of townships for Natives in the Witwatersrand and Vereeniging regions".[10]

The Mentz Committee completed its investigation towards the end of 1952. In November 1952 it met with municipalities on the East Rand and various mining and industrial companies to discuss the establishment of regional Black townships. At the same time the government initiated a parallel process to decide on future residential areas for Coloured and Indian people on the East Rand. On 2 December 1952 a Subsidiary Planning Committee (SPC) for this purpose was established under the chairmanship of Dr JH Moolman. In its report the SPC suggested that the Coloured populations from Germiston, Springs, Boksburg and Brakpan be moved to one township. An area in Boksburg, later known as Reiger Park, was identified for this purpose.[11]

The establishment of the 'new' Black townships on the East Rand took shape between 1949 and 1962. By the mid-1930s Germiston's location, Dukathole, was already experiencing overcrowding. Natalspruit was established in 1949 to help deal with this problem. KwaThema (in Springs) was established in 1952. Benoni resolved its first squatter crisis in 1949 with the building of Wattville. In 1950, however, it was confronted with another squatter crisis after the land invasion at Apex. Daveyton (Benoni) was officially declared a township in July 1954 and less than a year later the first residents from the Apex Squatter camp were moved there. Thokoza (Alberton) was laid out in 1957. Tsakane (Brakpan) and construction in Vosloorus (Boksburg) commenced in 1957 and 1962 respectively.[12]

Dr HF Verwoerd, Minister of Native Affairs, addressed a crowd of about 600 people at Prince George Park, Boksburg, in March 1955. At this occasion he made reference to the large-scale removals of people of colour that were on the cards for people living in the East Rand and in Johannesburg. The following month Boksburg's Native Housing problem was discussed with him in Cape Town. Stirtonville was overcrowded and the only alternative seemed to be the establishment of a new Native township.[13]

In August 1955 the Mentz Committee's 'grand plan' for the East Rand was announced. To some extent it endorsed some of the developments that were already underway. Black people residing in Payneville (Springs), Brakpan, and Dunnotar locations were to relocate to KwaThema, Tsakane and Duduza (KwaTsaDuza), and residents from the locations of Germiston, Alberton, Boksburg and Elsburg were to relocate to Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus (Kathorus). The committee also approved Benoni's plans (which were already well advanced by this time) to establish the Daveyton township to the northeast of the town.[14]

The Boksburg Town Council took ownership of about 52 acres of ground in 1950 on which Zindabad was to be established. The township was provisionally approved in 1951 and proclaimed as a township in 1952. In November 1952, the Administrator empowered the Council to sell stands in the township and approved the selling prices of the stands. However, on 2 December 1952 the secretary of the Land Tenure Board, later the Group Areas Board, said that until such time as recommendations were received from them for the placing of Indians, perhaps on a regional basis, it would be most unwise to proceed with Zindabad as an Indian area. "So, the Council had established a township but was unable to use it."[15]

In August 1959 the Boksburg Town Council proposed to the Group Areas Board that "Zindabad and the surrounding area be declared as an area for Indians for both residential and trading purposes and that Stirtonville location be declared as an area for Coloureds and that Galeview be declared as an area for either Indians or Coloureds."[16] At the time the Coloured population of Boksburg was approximately 2 000, while Stirtonville, including Galeview, could accommodate a population of 8 000. Zindabad was an approved and surveyed township and was, except for the provision of essential services, immediately available for Indian occupation. Indians from 14th Avenue, Boksburg North, and the so-called Byatt's stands in Commissioner and Eloff Streets would also be required to move to the new Indian area.[17] By July 1960 an estimated 3 000 families were living in Stirtonville, amounting to a population of around 13 500.

An aerial photograph of Stirtonville, ca 1940.

At a meeting of the Group Areas Board in Boksburg on the last Wednesday of September 1959 the Boksburg Town Council asked the Board to recommend to the Minister of non-European Affairs that Zindabad be declared an area for Indians for both trading and residential purposes. Mr J Unterhalter, for the Transvaal Indian Congress, AM Bhyat (Pty) Ltd and some families living in 14th Avenue, Boksburg North, opposed this recommendation and asked that the status quo be maintained.[18]

At a follow-up meeting of the Group Areas Board meeting the next week, on 1 October 1959, George Bizos, instructed by Messrs Massel and Massel, appeared for the Bhyat family. He reminded the Board of an agreement between General JC Smuts and Mr Mohandas Gandhi in 1914 that gave the late Mr AM Bhyat and members of his family the right to live and trade on three stands at the corner of Commissioner Street and Eloff Street.[19]

Mr Bhyat came to the Transvaal in 1890. In 1913 a summons was issued by the Mining Commissioner in Boksburg preventing Mr Bhyat from occupying the stands in Commissioner Street and Eloff Street. A notice of withdrawal was filed in Pretoria in 1915 and the case was never heard. In 1919 the property was transferred to the company AM Bhyat (Pty) Ltd. It consisted of 2 000 shares owned by 29 members of the Bhyat family. At the time of the Group Areas

Board hearings in 1959, 90% of the company's trade was said to have come from White people. Mr Bizos argued : "From the facts as a whole, it can be deduced that, in breach of that agreement, my clients are going to be herded together in Zindabad, deprived of their livelihood and condemned to live in a ghetto forever." [20]

By February 1961 the local newspaper speculated about where precisely the 'new' group areas for Coloureds and Indians would be. Germiston was keen to bid farewell to the Coloureds and Indians in the town. Its Council expressed a desire to become an 'all-white city', while the Benoni Town Council was eager to retain the Coloured population of the town. Boksburg was speculated to be the potential 'host' of the new Coloured location.[21]

Businesses expressed mixed views about the possible presence of greater numbers of Coloured workers in Boksburg.

> [O]ne personnel officer told the Advertiser that he had quite a few Coloureds apply for employment at his firm, but that he had had to turn them away because it was his company's policy not to employ Natives and Coloureds together. "It was either one or the other, and we have found that to employ both Coloured and Natives never works out favourably", he said.[22]

At a Boksburg Town Council meeting on 27 May 1961 it was announced that, "Boksburg is a Group Areas project envisaged as the residence of all Coloureds on the East Rand, though several towns have stated that they intend fighting to keep their Coloured population, whom they regard as valuable citizens in their own areas."[23] The site of the new Coloured location was to be at Zindabad and Stirtonville, two adjoining areas. Stirtonville, which was described by a municipal official as a 'clean town', already had many houses which were built as early as 1908. The official said that the township was to a certain extent overpopulated and that pondokkies had risen as a result of this. The old buildings would soon be demolished and the pondokkies would have to disappear when the 'big move' of Coloureds commenced. Zindabad was to be a very modern town with all the facilities.[24]

In September 1961 the Benoni Town Council received a letter from the Group Areas Board stating: (1) Stirtonville and Galeview in Boksburg, together with a few adjoining areas, would be zoned a Coloured area; (2) The Asiatic Bazaar in Benoni, Benoni Bantu township, the Old Coloured section and Actonville in Benoni would all be zoned an Asiatic area; and (3) Wattville would be earmarked as a Coloured area, but only when the Coloured area in Boksburg had reached its capacity. The Town Council of Benoni then approached their Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the "Komitee vir Kleurling Belange" to join the Council in order to petition the Minister concerned to revise the proposal of the Group Areas Board. The Minister supported the decisions of the Group Areas Board.[25]

A group area for Coloureds situated to the south of Asiatic Bazaar No. 2 (Kalamazoo), and comprising Zindabad Township and Portion 21 of the farm Leeuwpoort (Stirtonville), was formally proclaimed in the *Government Gazette* on Friday 26 October 1961. Native residents in the area were to be moved to Vosloorus.[26]

In Benoni the Coloured Vigilance Association, the Benoni District Indian Commercial Association, the African Vigilance Committee, the African Traders and Workers, the Transvaal Chinese Association, and even the Advisory Board supported a campaign against the Group Areas.[27]

The ancestors of most of the Indians who resided in Boksburg during the 1950s and early 1960s moved to the area to work on the coal mine near the present Boksburg East Railway Station.[28] An estimated 2 000 Indians were to be moved to Benoni, to which they objected. "Concluding their plea, the Indian leaders said that their people had always been peaceable, had always looked after themselves, and had kept apart."[29] Many of the

White people of Boksburg North were sympathetic to the pleas of the Indian traders of 14th Avenue. "The Indians keep to themselves; we have no cause to complain about them", was the general comment. The Indian traders argued that they advance credit to white customers, donate to the mayor's charity fund and assist many families financially. A young married (white) woman said she doesn't often buy from the Indian traders, but when she had, she had been given the best service. One resident expressed some concern, saying that he suspected that some Indians allowed Natives to stay at the back of their premises. This, he thought, could lead to the creation of slums.[30]

During the last week of November 1961 the Minister of Coloured Affairs, Mr P Botha, paid an unofficial visit to Boksburg. He toured the site of the new Zindabad Township, Galeview and Stirtonville. The minister was impressed by the rate of progress in Zindabad. Water pipes were already laid in the township and a start was made on the roads. The Electrical Department planned to install lights by March 1962. The initial plan was to build 100 'show' houses: 10 different types with two and three bedrooms.[31]

In the midst of all the political and ideological debates about separate group areas, and the introduction of laws to give effect to them, during the 1950s residents of the locations on the East Rand tried to make the best of their ever-overcrowding conditions and the limited municipal services provided. Stirtonville was promised a 600-seater social centre (similar to the Davey Social Centre in the Benoni location) and a gymnasium, but neither materialised after a halt was placed on the development of the location.[32] In 1959 five churches in Stirtonville were given notice to cease operations by 31 December 1960, as they were considered to occupy sites illegally, since they had not received ministerial approval and thus were "not officially recognised by the Government".[33] The five churches were the African Mission Society, The Ethiopian Church, the Congregational Coloured Church, the Apostolic Faith Mission, and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Spirits in Zion. It is unlikely that the Boksburg Town Council carried through with this threat. At least two of these five churches have had a presence in Reiger Park since its proclamation.

A number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provided assistance to the residents of Stirtonville, one of which was the Red Cross Association, which operated a crèche accommodating 55 children between the ages 2 and 6 years. Ms Elizabeth Letlabika was the nursery school teacher, Ms Kate de Vos the cook and caretaker and Ms Hodge, secretary of the Boksburg division of the Red Cross Association, helped with supervision. The doors of the crèche opened "at 06.30 as many parents go to work early; closing time is never definite".[34]

In June 1958 the Boksburg Town Council decreed that 'non-European' transport services (taxis and buses) be moved from the Boksburg Station, previously known as Vogelfontein Station, to the East Rand Station. The 'non-European' taxi drivers, who now had to operate a rank at East Rand station, decided to contest the legality of the Council's action as they were no longer allowed to pick up fare-paying passengers at Boksburg Station. Taxi drivers argued that although the Railways had ordered express trains to stop at East Rand Station passengers preferred to use Boksburg station. East Rand Station also witnessed a number of assaults on passengers during this period.[35]

4

A period of uncertainty and hope: 1962 to 1964

By the end of 1961 the government had decided that Boksburg would be home to the Coloured Group Area on the East Rand, in what later became known as the 'greater' Reiger Park, also incorporating Stirtonville, Galeview and Asiatic Bazaar (No.1). In Benoni, Actonville (incorporating the Old Benoni Location), Park Town and the Asiatic Bazaar would become home to Indians.

None of the other towns on the East Rand were supposed to accommodate any Coloureds or Indians. This dream soon turned out to be unrealistic given the limited sizes of the respective areas that were initially demarcated. Wattville in Benoni adjacent to the Old Benoni Location, which was at one point earmarked for the 'overflow' Coloureds once Reiger Park had reached its capacity, was to remain a Black location. Daveyton became the main location for Black people in Benoni and Vosloorus was its counterpart in Boksburg. A few years later Geluksdal (in Brakpan) was established to accommodate Coloureds primarily from Payneville, Springs. Bakerton in Springs was to remain an area for Indians. Eden Park and Palm Ridge in Alberton were to become home for Coloureds and Indians respectively, primarily from Germiston (Dukathole and the adjacent Indian Bazaar), but also from other 'near' East Rand towns such as Edenvale and Kempton Park. Rabie Ridge (Kempton Park) and Alra Park (Nigel) were later also established to house Coloureds.

From Benoni and Germiston to Stirtonville/Reiger Park

At the beginning of 1962 the expectation was that some homes in Reiger Park would be ready for occupation by the middle of the year. The 'smaller' Reiger Park area was to consist of 230 residential stands and a few business stands.[1] The general expectation was that some houses in Vosloorus would have been built by the end of that year. In a 'new' area next to Stirtonville, Galeview Extension (later renamed informally 'Little Germiston' by the residents), 60 houses were to be constructed. A recreational site on the north-west bank of the Cinderella Dam, to include swimming and boating facilities, was envisaged as "additional

The Reiger Park swimming pool on the envisaged Reiger Park recreational site. Most of the 'additional attractions to encourage Coloureds to move the area' never materialised (CH Morden, 2021).

attractions to encourage Coloureds to move to the area". It was envisaged that Coloured pupils from Germiston where the school was expected to be closed within six months because of industrial expansion would be bussed to Boksburg every day until their families finally moved to the 'greater' Reiger Park.[2]

By August 1962 ten show houses, six three-bedroom houses and four two-bedroom houses, were completed in the 'smaller' Reiger Park area and many families had bought stands. Meanwhile the local newspaper reported of the first bottle store that opened in Stirtonville on Friday 17 August 1962, accompanied by a photo of an "African woman buying her first 'white' liquor at the bottle store". It also reported that the "bottle store is run by a European manager, who is to have two assistant managers eventually".[3]

Among the Coloured community of Dukathole, the Germiston location, there was uncertainty if and by when they were to be moved to Boksburg or if they would be accommodated within the Germiston municipal area. A spokesperson of the community said that at a meeting in November 1961, where the Germiston and Boksburg Town Councils and the "Germiston Kleurling Waaksaamheid Komitee" were present, they were advised that the Coloured residents would have to move to Boksburg. Some of the 4 500 residents of the location in Germiston had already started to apply to the Boksburg Council to move. They also complained that the health conditions in the Germiston location were not

very favourable, saying that "filth and contagious diseases are rife".

The Boksburg Town Clerk, Mr P Rudo Nell, reiterated the official position that Coloureds from all over the East Rand – Edenvale, Bedfordview, Kempton Park, Germiston, Alberton, Boksburg and Benoni – would be resettled in the Boksburg Coloured area. No area for Coloureds would be established within the Germiston municipal area, as "the grounds now occupied by Coloureds in Germiston are to be used for industrial expansion".[4]

In November 1962 Mr F Buitenbach, director of the Germiston non-European Affairs Department, said that "there is a waiting list of Coloureds who were ready to move; they will be resettled in Galeview Extension (Little Germiston) where 60 new houses were completed".[5]

By this time it was reported: "The Coloured exodus from Germiston is well underway. We are letting houses left, right and centre", according to a spokesman for the Boksburg non-European Affairs Department. Apart from the Galeview (Little Germiston) move, nine or ten Coloured families had settled in Reiger Park, the spokesman said. It was also reported that a certain Mr and Mrs P Flagg had moved to Reiger Park from Benoni "about three weeks ago".[6] By February 1963 a total of 98 stands were sold in Reiger Park.

Around April 1963 discussions were held between the Boksburg and Benoni Town Councils about the move of Indians in Boksburg to Benoni and of Coloureds in Benoni to Boksburg. The Town Clerk of Benoni, Mr FS Taylor, said: "The Benoni Bantu Township was at present being replanned. It would be disestablished as a Coloured Township and laid out for Indian settlement." The removal of the 'Africans' from Stirtonville to Vosloorus was initially expected to commence towards the end of September 1963. However, it was only in June 1963 that a tender to the value of R1 million was awarded for the construction of 3 000 houses in Vosloorus.[7]

While these talks about and plans for relocations were underway, cosmetic administrative reforms of the locations were put in place. A Bantu Council "with much wider powers and duties" replaced the Stirtonville Advisory Board. This was done in terms of the Urban Bantu Council's Act of 1961. A Consultative Committee to assist the Town Council with the administration of the Coloured area was in the pipeline for Reiger Park.

> The Committee was to consist of five local Coloureds, of whom two will be appointed by the Provincial Administration, two by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development and one by the Town Council. The Town Council nominated Mr JJ Collins, the Principal of Goede Hoop Primary School, as its representative on the Committee.[8]

The move of the first group of 600 black families, estimated at about 3 600 people, from Stirtonville to Vosloorus was scheduled for 16 March 1964. The Boksburg Town Council offered a grant of R7 to families able to make their own arrangements. Families unable to make any arrangements were to be transported by the Council free of charge. A disagreement between the Boksburg Town Council and the Government Transportation Levy Fund led to this move being delayed.

The Council said it could not afford to subsidise the transport of Africans to work from the new Township, about 15 miles outside Boksburg. The Council requested a 4 cent subsidy from the Fund; the transport costs per person was estimated at 20 cents per trip from the township to work in the industrial areas of Boksburg. The Fund was prepared to only subsidise at the rate of 1 cent in 10 cents. Mr FC Stevens, the manager of the Stirtonville Township, said "many African workers walked to and from work at present and this will not be possible when they are moved to Vosloorus".[9] A few weeks later it was reported:

> Hundreds of African, Indian and Coloured families this week (of 24 April 1964) again unpacked their

personal belongings, still unable to move into their new homes in Boksburg and Benoni, established under the Government's Group Areas Act. The complex move remains bogged down as a result of a disagreement between the Government Transportation Levy Fund and the Boksburg Town Council. At Stirtonville, hundreds of Africans remain on a standby alert. In Benoni, plans to transfer 700 Coloured families to Boksburg have been temporarily put on hold.

Meanwhile the thousands of families affected by the move continue to pack and unpack, hoping that a definite decision will be reached in the near future. Some heads of families have already given up jobs in one area in the hope of finding work nearer to their new homes, but have been unable to take up their new employment because of the transfer delay.[10]

In Reiger Park Mr AG Oberholzer, formerly the clerk to the Boksburg Council, was appointed as temporary administrative assistant for Coloured Affairs under the Department of non-European Affairs. In Benoni more than 1 000 residential sites between Benoni's old Bantu Township and Actonville were set aside to accommodate Indian families.[11]

The impasse between the Boksburg Town Council and the Government Transportation Levy Fund was resolved by the middle of May 1964. Revised estimates of transport costs of 10 cents per head per day from Vosloorus to the industrial sites and 12.5 cents per head per day from the township to Boksburg (centre) were arrived at. A monthly season bus ticket would cost R3.90, based on a transport subsidy of 7.5 cents per head per day.[12]

The mass movement of Boksburg and Benoni's three (main) racial groups under the terms of the Group Areas Act was rescheduled to commence from 23 May 1964. Mr Nell said that the Native Advisory Board had asked Boksburg to begin moving the first African families from Galeview and Stirtonville over a weekend so that local industries would not be affected by the move.[13]

The following week the local newspaper reported: "A mighty, massive move is underway as all roads lead towards Vosloorus. Large convoys of trucks piled with household goods sent an almost continuous cloud of dust into the skies last weekend as the massive resettlement of Boksburg's African population got underway."[14]

The second phase of the Government's programme under the Groups Areas Act on the East Rand, the transfer of thousands of Coloured families to Reiger Park, Galeview, and Stirtonville, began in August 1964. Some Coloured families were so keen to move that they had undertaken to renovate and re-paint the houses themselves. But in the majority of cases the council had completed the work before the families moved in. In a letter to the *Boksburg Advertiser* Mr RJ Triegaardt, senior Afrikaans teacher at the William Hills High School, said although he realised much was being done for the Coloured community, "in the meantime there are pinpricks". He complained about the abnormal number of flies in Reiger Park, high rents, lack of liaison with the Boksburg municipal authorities' road and lighting systems and lack of building loans. Building Societies were only providing 40% of the required amount. Mr SA Meyer, who was in the process of moving from Benoni to Reiger Park, said that the lack of finance was the biggest obstacle of the resettlement scheme. Mrs Marion de Lange, who moved into Stirtonville from Benoni "less than two weeks ago" said: "They [the Town Council] have been most helpful so far in advising us and assisting us to settle into our new homes."[15]

Noor Nieftagodien reported: "Positive sentiments about the new townships (Group Areas) were fairly common among lodgers and squatters for whom these townships often represented an escape from unbearable overcrowding, lack of basic facilities and exploitation by rack-renting landlords in the old locations and squatter camps."[16] He noted that

the Coloured Vigilance Association (who opposed the forced removal to Boksburg) found it difficult to convince lodgers to heed its call not to move to Reiger Park. George du Plessis, whom he interviewed in 2000, recalled: "the people that actually ran for these houses were the people who were living in the backyards, people who were living in the Indian Section. Also, when they moved there (to Boksburg) the Council told them, all we are going to charge you is £2 a month. Here (in Benoni) you are paying £3 or £4 a month for a little shack in the yard. So those were the people we could not stop."[17]

During October 1964 nearly 4 000 Coloured people from Benoni moved to Boksburg and about 3 000 Indians from Boksburg moved to Benoni.

> The large number of Coloured women going shopping in Boksburg and the increasing number of juvenile hawkers selling fruit and flowers … bear testimony to the new residents in Boksburg. … [When] the township is complete it will boast its own town hall, administrative offices, a three-star hotel, churches, schools, sports grounds and swimming pools. A coloured industrial area was also on the cards… The large-scale transfer of Coloured and Indian families between Boksburg and Benoni [have] gone without a hitch.[18]

At the same time, an application from three Chinese people to purchase property in the Asiatic Bazaar was said to be under consideration by the Council.[19]

In November 1964 the Town Council approved changes to the street names in the 'smaller' Reiger Park area. As noted previously, this area was initially, in the early 1950s, earmarked as an Indian area called Zindabad and the streets were named after Indian families, from the Asiatic Bazaar (No.2) Kalamazoo.

The people of Stirtonville tried their best to carry on with their lives during this period of upheaval. The South African National Tuberculosis Association (SANTA) provided support to TB patients and their dependants in the location. Mr Don Turton was the chairman of the Boksburg branch of SANTA at the time. At a fundraising function for SANTA in early December 1962, a ball held in the Stirtonville Beer Hall, twenty-one debutants were presented to Mr Russell L Riley, the American Consul-General, and his wife. The following young women were debutants: Agrisca Mazwi, Diana Seritsane, Elizabeth Magubane, Elizabeth Orr, Ester Collins, Hope Domingues, Ida Shein, Imelda Patience Mokonane, Isabel Khumalo, Jean Ndhlandhla, Margaret Nyaka, Maureen Zwane, Mavis Yantolo, Myrtle Lituku, Peggy Mogolane, Phyllis Kopolo, Phyllis Sonqishe, Rebecca Seritsane, Snowy Maseko, Stella Mogotlane and Thulie Mazibuko. Sister Mabel Dlamini was the convener of the ball and the master of ceremonies was Mr Peter Rezant. A well-known band supplied the music while Miss C Stahmer played the piano. Ida Shein, one of the debutants,

Street name changes approved in November 1964

Zindabad	Reiger Park	Zindabad	Reiger Park
Laher Street	Violet Street	Kalidas Street	Dahlia Street
Ramsammy Street	Goede Hoop Street	Sigamoney Street	Middle Street
Khan Street	Cassell Avenue	Mohamed Street	Excelsior Avenue
Mosque Street	Petunia Street	Daya Street	Tulip Street
Temple Street	Jacaranda Street	Medan Street	Protea Street
Moodley Street	Iris Street	Teladia Street	Lilac Street
Seethal Street	Gousblom Street	Gongadin Avenue	Drommedaris Street
Armogum Street	Eike Street		

made a presentation of a Springbok skin to Mrs Riley as a token of life in South Africa. R500 was raised for SANTA. The Rev Malefefe addressed the gathering and thanked everyone for their efforts on behalf of the organisation.

The American Consul-General and his wife, prior to their engagement at Stirtonville, met the mayor of Bokburg at the town hall, where "[t]he Mayor entertained the European guests before they left the Town Hall for the Location and after the presentations they returned to the Town Hall where they were entertained by the SANTA committee."[20]

Other snippets of news that were reported on from 1961 to 1964 that give an indication of changes and life at the time are:

In April 1963 Mr Basil Keartland, a well-known golfer, was asked to inspect possible sites in Boksburg for a 'non-white' golfing centre in the Transvaal and make recommendations as to their suitability.

Mr Vivian Radebe was principal at Polokegong Higher Primary School in Stirtonville.

Miss Frances Ramashala (27), of 504 Mavbane Street, Stirtonville, graduated with a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand in December 1964.

As from Wednesday 15 August 1962, the law permitted all 'Bantu' people to buy any type of liquor at standard prices at bottle stores. A rather informative and probably still relevant pamphlet/ advert appeared in the local newspaper, advising readers to "Go Slow with The New Liquor".[21]

From Stirtonville to Vosloorus

A growing economy, in particular a growing manufacturing sector after the Second World War, led to an increase in the demand for labour on the Witwatersrand. The provision of housing and other amenities in the urban areas did not keep up with the increasing numbers of work-seekers that were flocking to these areas. The local newspaper in an editorial observed: "the Reef's Native housing is in a chaotic state".[22] It pleaded for more resources to be made available by the State, as the municipalities could not address this problem on their own. This editorial was in response to an address by Mr AS Marais, manager of the Boksburg Municipality's non-European Affairs Department, to the Boksburg Rotary in September 1948. His presentation was titled: "Native Influx problem will not be solved for years".

In 1922 at a conference between Local Government Commission (the Stallard Commission of 1922) and the Native Affairs Commission, it was agreed that a statutory duty be placed on municipal bodies to provide adequate housing accommodation for all Natives within their areas and that suitable powers be given to these bodies to control the ingress of Natives into their areas.

The Natives (Urban Areas) Act No. 21 of 1923 gave local authorities certain responsibilities over Natives in urban areas, but the supervision over the municipal control of Natives was retained by the central government. This act was amended over the years and the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidated Act No. 25 of 1945 was passed. Following its promulgation the Boksburg Town Council established a non-European Affairs Department in 1946.

Mr Marais mentioned that the Boksburg Town Council took over the registration of Native service contracts from 1 September 1948. The Department was now said to be able to "effectively control" the influx of Natives into the Boksburg area through its newly established labour market bureau, which was to provide a "very useful service" to both employers and employees. Employers could henceforth make use of the labour market bureau, "instead of selecting from loitering groups outside their gates". By that time Germiston, Springs and Nigel had already taken over the registration of Native services and the feedback was said to have been positive.

By 1948, with the acute shortage of housing, many white residents had for economic and other reasons, taken advantage of the natives' plight and numerous natives, and in many cases native families, were

housed in backyards, in shacks on smallholdings, and also in Boksburg's notorious Asiatic Bazaar (No. 2).

In another editorial in August 1951 the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* again tried to grapple with the "Native housing problem". It argued, in a very demeaning way:

> The Native is a cog – perhaps one of the small cogs – in the machinery which turns our industries. Our duty is to see that he is properly housed and that he has recreation. This will lead to decreases in crime. People who are content seldom commit crimes. Youths at work will not have time for misdeeds, and if after working hours they are provided with some sort of recreation, the possibility that they will venture into crime is remote.[23]

In December 1951 the Boksburg Town Council was reminded of its responsibility to provide housing for all Natives working in Boksburg, although they might "currently be resident in Benoni". The people being discussed in this article initially qualified to reside in Benoni but were subsequently disqualified after taking up employment in Boksburg, and as such the Boksburg Town Council had to provide the required housing.[24]

The Native housing problem in Boksburg was discussed with the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr HF Verwoerd, in April 1955. With Stirtonville overcrowded the establishment of a new Native location was agreed upon. This was in line with recommendations by the Mentz Commission and followed the establishment of similar locations in the neighbouring towns on the East Rand (Germiston, Benoni and Springs).[25] An application for the approval to purchase land, 1 092 morgen, situated to the east of Natalspruit for the proposed new Native location for Boksburg was submitted to Dr Verwoerd in July 1955. Earlier that year permission to build a Social Centre in Stirtonville was withdrawn, with the understanding that the facility would instead be built in the new Native location. "Another section of the 'non-European' population in Boksburg can use the new Stirtonville Administrative office, built at a cost of £10 000 and opened by the mayor, Cllr JHA Roets, last month." [26]

By October 1955 the government was in the process of expropriating the mineral rights on the land earmarked for the new Native location in Boksburg. The new location was said to follow the example of Daveyton Bantu Township in Benoni, where the site-and-service scheme was being successfully operated.[27] The Boksburg Town Council bought the land at a cost of £147 359 in 1955.[28] In 1960 the Town Council signed 42 different deeds to secure the mineral rights over the land at a cost of £20 865.[29]

In June 1956 the Native Service Levy Act was ratified. A levy of 2s. 6d. per week, payable by employers in respect of Native employees not housed by such employers, was imposed. The funds were to be earmarked for "certain essential services to enable Native housing projects to get underway and to wipe out the enormous backlog for housing and re-housing of Natives in urban areas where the problem was acute."[30]

Vosloorus was named after Dr WL Vosloo, who was Deputy Minister of the Department of Cooperation and Development. According to Ms Susan Dowd of the current Ekurhuleni Municipality, the name Vosloorus was accepted by the Place Names Committee in 1958 and Vosloorus was officially proclaimed as a black township on 18 October 1963.[31] The construction of the first 3 000 four-room houses (two bedrooms, a kitchen/dining room, and a living room/lounge) in Vosloorus already commenced in late 1962. Toilet facilities were to be outside. The estimated cost per house was R420. The first phase was planned to be completed by the end of 1963. The estimated costs for the first phase of the project was R2 128 500. A total of 12 000 houses were envisaged in the fully developed location.[32]

After several delays, discussed earlier, the removal of the Black population from Stirtonville to Vosloorus commenced on 23 May 1964. An estimated R300 000 was paid as compensation to about 400

African families who owned homes in Stirtonville. "The compensation figures were arrived at by sworn appraisers appointed by the Council and the Department of Bantu Administration, and there were no complaints or objections to the amounts offered."[33]

Ms Dowd reported that a total of 446 private properties, including 19 churches and 10 shops in Stirtonville, were 'relocated' from Stirtonville to Vosloorus. The churches in Stirtonville and their leaders at the time were Anglican Church (Rev Mejestands), Bantu Methodist (Rev Ndayi), African Mission Society (Silas Matlala) Baptist Union of SA (Abel Sekese), Ethiopian Church (Dina Selebe), Congregational Union (Rev J Wing), African Catholic Church (EM Philo), Methodist Church of SA (Rev B Mhlebekoane), AME Mission (Rev T Thatelo), Ebenezer Coloured Church (J Collins), Bantu Evangelical Church (Rev RW Christensen), Congregational Church (Rev EA Swartz), Presbyterian Church (Rev PMS Mamabole), American Mission (Rev T Wing), NG Sendingkerk (HJ Bosman), Apostolic Faith Mission (Rev J Lawu), Wesleyan Coloured Church (Rev DA Moore), the Church of Sweden Mission (Jeremiah Radebe) and the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church.[34]

The first five schools built in Vosloorus were: Dithomo Lower Primary (Sotho), Indonsa Lower Primary (Zulu), Zimele Lower Primary (Zulu), Polokegong Higher Primary (Sotho) and Hlabahlangene Higher Primary (Zulu).

The official opening of Vosloorus was held on Tuesday 6 June 1967, presided over by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Mr FC Botha, three years after its establishment in 1964. When the first families moved there in May 1964, 900 homes were completed and by June 1967 there were 4 000 fully developed residential sites, with an estimated population of 24 000. At the time 8 000 residential sites were underdeveloped. Fully developed, the location was to be home to an estimated population of 60 000. "The township acts as a convenient reservoir of semi-skilled and skilled labour for the town's rapidly expanding industry", Mr Barry Marais, Director of non-European Affairs of Boksburg said. Mr Botha remarked:

> Many misrepresentations concerning influx control have been made and I would like to take this opportunity to explain the necessity of this measure. Influx control prevents the development of slum conditions and crime, because it regulates the labour flow to White areas where the worker is guaranteed of employment and proper wage levels. With the enormous amount of capital spent by the government each year on the development of proper residential townships for the African population of our country, we are confident that with co-operation, a peaceful and harmonious relationship can be shared between White and Black races.[35]

Zaid Khumalo wrote in the *Kathorus Mail* in 2016 about an area in Boksburg informally called "e'Julewe", loosely translated to mean "jewellery" or "place of wealth", that was set aside to accommodate "blacks, coloureds and Asians who could not find immediate employment at the nearby mines". He continues:

> A noticeable mark to the entrance of the settlement was an Asian trading market known as Kalamazoo which was a popular meeting point for the locals and travellers.
>
> Soon, the growing mixed community of the township of e'Julewe started building schools and churches, and one such school, the Boksburg Coloured School, also known as Goede Hoop Primary, which first opened its doors in the township in 1905, remains the oldest school in Boksburg.
>
> It was this diverse but united community that moulded the new township. Together they managed to turn e'Julewe into a fashionable and progressive human settlement.
>
> Soon, as time went by, e'Julewe grew into a well-known, vibrant, and sophisticated township with a sociable rating on par with, if not over,

A letter by small business owners

Competition for resources and the quest for a level playing field, even in the midst of extreme discriminatory practices, is a hallmark of the human spirit. One example that illustrates this is a letter written by several small-business owners of Vosloorus to the Director of non-European Affairs of Boksburg on 7 August 1970.

We, the signatories to this letter, being licensed African Traders at Vosloorus, wish to object very strongly to the erection of the proposed shop buildings which, we gather, are to be put up by a certain Mr Wolff just outside our location gates along the main road serving this township from Boksburg town.

Our reasons for doing so are as follows:-

(1) The move to establish shops, within such close proximity of our township to be rented out to persons who is not Bantu, is in direct conflict with Government Policy, as we were made to understand when we involuntarily resettled from Stirtonville to Vosloorus.

(2) It is common knowledge that we would never be able to compete with any of the lessees of the proposed shops who are not Bantu because of our low income level and this, to the Government we hold dear, we know to be anathema.

(3) In the light of the high rentals we currently pay for our shops to the Boksburg Municipality, it is axiomatic that once the proposed Wolff shops are allowed to exist, then we can expect to shut shop which, we believe, the Government is not prepared to implement.

(4) According to an economic survey by the South African Institute of Race Relations, it is known that the poorest African family must earn at least R50 (fifty rand) a month to make ends meet and this, from our experience as Traders, we know our people find it very difficult to find – let alone their inability to settle our accounts which we reluctantly have to issue to them to subsist, as well as their failure to pay their residential rental regularly. To obviate this, it follows that the people to man the proposed Wolff shops would have to be bulk buyers prepared to sell at very rock bottom prices to the total annihilation of our small businesses. Is it therefore, any wonder that we should send this S.O.S. cry to those in authority over us?

(5) Last but not least, apartheid becomes a farce, if the state of affairs depicted here is tolerated.

We therefore, one and all of us, seriously implore the Council to reverse its decision on these buildings and also appeal to the Licensing Department to refuse the issue of any trading licences to any contemplated applicants wishing to occupy the proposed Wolff Shop Buildings.[37]

those other equally popular budding black settlements on the outskirts of Johannesburg, such as Pimville and Kliptown in the southeast of Johannesburg, Sophiatown, or "Kofifi" in the north and Alexandra township in the northeast. But unlike the rest, e'Juwele, was regarded as "stable" and free of the violent crimes linked to gang activity.[36]

Although an interesting article, much of it is based on information contained in the Wikipedia article on Boksburg and it therefore includes a few factual inaccuracies and makes reference to present-day Reiger Park in a rather uninformed and prejudiced manner. Vosloorus had been around for 52 years in 2016, not 54 as he stated, since the removal of Black residents from Stirtonville to Vosloorus only commenced in May 1964. The area that became known as Stirtonville was officially only established in December 1908. The 'old Native' area accommodating both Blacks and Coloureds that was adjacent to Kalamazoo was dis-established between 1909 and 1910 and its residents moved to Stirtonville, a few kilometres to the south. It was probably this 'old Native' location that was referred to as e'Julewe.

5

The early days of Reiger Park: 1965 to 1972

A luta continua, Vitória é certa.
The struggle continues, victory is certain.

Reiger Park became home to Coloured people from across the East Rand as well as from areas as far as Herschel in the Eastern Cape, and the Northern Cape. By mid-1965 about 8 000 Coloured people had been resettled in Reiger Park, comprising 1 107 families from Benoni, 170 from Germiston, 38 from Putfontein and 33 from Heidelberg. A further 298 families came from Boksburg and an undisclosed number came from the outlying areas.[1] Some of the Herschelites had been small farmers in the Eastern Cape but were forced to give up their farms when the government introduced its new homelands policy in 1959.[2]

In January 1965 the Boksburg Town Council announced plans to release 2 500 housing stands for White people in the areas of Van Dyk, Boksburg South Extension 3, Parkdene Extension and Libradene Extension. 1 539 housing stands were to be released for Coloured people in Reiger Park Extension 1.[3]

By March 1965, the 'great trek' of the Coloured community predominantly from Benoni and Germiston to Boksburg came to a temporary halt because of a shortage of accommodation. Between the middle of 1964 and March 1965 some 1 659 families (from Benoni, Germiston, Brakpan, Edenvale, Kempton Park and Alberton) were resettled in Boksburg. An additional estimated 1 198 families were still to be accommodated in Boksburg from various areas on the East Rand. Given the lack of accommodation, the Council decided to hold the resettlement programme in abeyance until Reiger Park Extension 1 was approved.[4]

Around this time the residents of Galeview Extension (Little Germiston) began to complain about an increase in their monthly rent from R15 to R24.89 (equal to R1 413.46 and R2 345.40 respectively at 2022 prices; R1 = R94.23).[5] The Department of Community Development also proposed an increase in the monthly rental for houses in Galeview: for

The Doubles, one of the oldest areas of Stirtonville. Some of the houses date back to the 1910s (CH Morden, 2021).

the 386 four-room houses, an increase from R5.00 to R7.90 and for the 293 three-room houses, from R4.50 to R6.00. In Stirtonville monthly rental for the 640 single quarters increased from R1.75 to R2.60; for the 240 huts (doubles) it increased from R3.25 to R6.70; for the 91 two-bedroom houses (in the area called Jerusalem) from R5.50 to R14.42; and for the 47 three-bedroom houses (Stirtonville) from R6.00 to R17.72. These numbers suggest that there were in total about 1 697 houses/units in Stirtonville and Galeview combined, 1 018 and 679 respectively.[6]

In May 1965 the Town Council decided that Coloured families moving to Boksburg, i.e. Reiger Park, under the Group Areas Act would in future be subject to a Means Test before being allocated homes in Stirtonville and Galeview. This decision was taken in the light of the number of families that were in arrears with their rent. The 27 families that were in arrears owed the municipality in total R1 370, "an indication that many Coloureds have bitten off more than they can afford". The Council was considering steps to evict such families. Cllr I Kramer suggested that alternative accommodation should be explored. Cllr Roets commented: "I must say, however, when the authorities began issuing eviction notices it was surprising how many families come to light with their arrears."[7]

The five-man Coloured Consultative Committee (Mr CA September, chairman; Mr JJ Collins, vice-chairman; Mr E Greeff, Mr A Foster and Mr MF du Preez); appointed on 19 November 1964, published its first newsletter in the form of a four-page document in July 1965. Many residents of Reiger Park complained that the Committee had not been doing its work. The estimated number of residents in 'greater' Reiger Park at the time stood at 9 000.

This newsletter referred to arrangements underway for the construction and tarring of Excelsior Avenue; bus routes in Galeview and Stirtonville that had improved; and firewood, a necessity to winter warmth that was on sale at 15 cents per bag. It asked for better policing; for a reduction of rentals; for improved welfare work in the area; for improvements to the Baker Park sports field, and changes to the street names.[8]

A dispute arose between the Town Council and Coloured families who lived in Stirtonville before the area was set aside for Coloureds in terms of the Group Areas Act. As was the case in other locations, some residents in these areas could own their houses but not the stands. With Stirtonville becoming a Coloured area, both Black and Coloured people who owned houses in the area received some form of compensation. A number of these old Stirtonville houses that were 'owned' were on 'large' stands and were earmarked to be demolished at a later stage. Some Coloured residents received compensation but were allowed to stay on in 'their' houses temporarily. However, given that they received compensation they were now required to pay rent to the Council. Many argued that the compensation they had received was very little and the fact that they would now have to pay rent for an indefinite period might in the end add up to be more than the compensation received.

A letter of complaint by 21 Coloured residents was sent to the Council. It stated that before their houses were taken over by the Council, they paid R2 each month, which was for the hire of the ground on which the houses stood. They were dissatisfied with the low amount of compensation paid to the house owners, especially in view of the fact that many went ahead with improvements to their homes believing they would not be required to move. They produced written consent that they had received from the Council to go ahead with these improvements. They also argued that Coloured house owners, both from Germiston and Benoni, who had to move to Boksburg, received compensation for their houses which afforded them a profit, while the Stirtonville residents had their houses taken over at a loss.

The Council decided that the residents would only be allowed to stay in the houses rent-free, except for the R2 charge, if they repaid the compensation in full. The Council also stated that all residents were liable for the "services rendered to them", that no increased compensation would be considered and that the houses had to be kept in good order. Some residents chose to keep the compensation money and they were required to pay rent to the council which was calculated as one-twelfth of 10% of the compensation received; plus residential premises rentals of R2 per house and R6 per business premises; sewerage fees of R1; sanitary fees at 4 cents; and loss of rental money calculated at 10% of the above.[9]

By August 1965 a total of 110 Coloured families were in arrears with the rentals amounting to R4 316 and were facing evictions. The individual arrears ranged from R6.97 to R138.74. The management Committee recommended that rentals on six houses in Stirtonville, which ranged from R31.64 to R55.13 per month, be reduced by 25% as the Coloured community could not afford such high rentals, and the Council found it difficult to let these houses.[10] Rev BW Habberton, rector of St Dunston's Anglican Church in Benoni, with around 400 families in Stirtonville belonging to the parish, spoke out against Boksburg Council's treatment of the Coloured community. According to him the rents were, in the main, too high and evictions were a problem.

Five Black families living in houses in Stirtonville, which belonged to them before the Boksburg Town Council took them over, were threatened with eviction because they were in arrears with rent. The total arrears for the five tenant families amounted to R294.52. The houses become the property of the Council in April 1965. Several Black families had

Developments in the 'greater' Reiger Park in January 1968

Reiger Park [the smaller area] boasts homes costing R14 000 and is run by an efficient Advisory Council. In Reiger Park the Boksburg Town Council has done wonders in a very short time. Well established gardens are proof of the householder's pride in Reiger Park.

Next to Reiger Park is old Stirtonville, wood and iron shacks, tumble-down churches and school buildings, sack-enclosed porches, nestle cheek by jowl with the new houses. Living in relics from the old mining days are hundreds of families who cannot be accommodated in better homes. A school building which has long since been condemned is still used as a church. The streets are mud tracks without lights. Sanitation is communal and primitive. Pavements are non-existent. In bad weather, inadequate sack and cardboard patchings on homes allow wet and cold to enter the dwellings. Up to 17 people occupy one- bedroomed homes. Barefooted, raggedly dressed children play among the rubble and along the main street.

The "shopping centre" with its gravel sidewalks is reminiscent of a scene in a turn of the century Western film, with boarded fronts on corrugated iron buildings. Several unsafe buildings are regularly demolished.

Stirtonville people fear for their lives and rarely venture outdoors by night. Gangs of hooligans terrorise old people, who barricade themselves in their homes during the day as well as the evening. A bucket of water heated on an open brazier is substitute for a bathroom. Under these conditions, more than 8 000 people battle to live decently, dress decently and stay healthy.[15]

delayed their move to Vosloorus, preferring to wait until they were compensated for their dwellings. The applications by Black tenants for more time to complete their houses in Vosloorus were refused. Among the five families was a woman and her family, who said she could not move "until the cement floors in the premises allocated to her Vosloorus house have set". Her rental arrears totalled R23.96.[11]

In June 1967 the Boksburg Town Council applied for borrowing powers totalling R9 900 to be used as payments for compensation to the seven Indian families still living in Reiger Park who had been asked to vacate their homes. The Council was anxious to remove the Indian families as the premises were required for business development. However, no deadline was set for their move.[12] In February 1968 the Town Council was requested by the Department of Community Development to allow the Indians, still living in Reiger Park, to continue staying there. Although they had been given notice to vacate their present homes by 1 February 1968, alternative accommodation was not yet available in Actonville, Benoni.[13] Many years later, in May 1981, mayhem in Reiger Park led to the destruction of most of the remaining Indian-owned shops in the area.

In December 1970 'leading' Boksburg Indians met informally with the mayor, Cllr CDS Smith. He expressed the view that Boksburg's Indians should have a modern shopping complex, like the one that was in Klerksdorp. According to him the Minister of Community Development, Mr Blaar Coetzee, promised that the Indians' business rights in Boksburg would not be taken away, although they had to move to a new residential area in Benoni. Cllr Smith suggested that a new complex should be built between Boksburg and Benoni and was optimistic that such a complex could become ''an attraction like the Durban Indian Market, except on a much more modern basis''. The chairman of the Boksburg Indian Chamber of Commerce, Mr I Teladia, said the suggestion of an ultramodern complex was an excellent idea and that Indians would cooperate in every possible way.[14] This 'dream' was never realised.

While some of the old houses in Stirtonville were renovated, many were demolished and the vacant

The Local Vet

A moving story of life in the 'greater' Reiger Park in the late 1960s is that of 'the first veterinarian' in the location, Mr Thomas Mhlongo, and his assistant Mr Johannes Mabena. By the middle of 1968 Oupa Tom, as Mr Mhlongo was affectionately known, had been attending to animals for about 30 years, most of that time in Benoni. By 1968 Mr Mabena had been helping him for slightly more than three years. It all started in the Old Benoni Location where Mr Mhlongo was 'discovered' by the late Mrs Duckley, founder of the Benoni Bantu Animal Protection Society, who trained him as her assistant when she visited locations to attend to the animals there.

Before Stirtonville was declared a Coloured area, many of the township's residents lived in Benoni where Mr Mhlongo regularly treated their animals. Subsequently some Coloured residents from Stirtonville, formerly from Benoni, travelled from Boksburg to Benoni to get their animals treated. The Benoni Bantu Animal Society decided to send Mr Mhlongo to Stirtonville to help with the animals in the area. A few years later when the Society felt the clinic should be closed because it cost too much to run, Oupa Tom and Johannes refused to give up their work in the location.

Every Wednesday they travelled to Stirtonville where they spent the morning visiting homes where they suspected animals were being ill-treated or were called to examine animals at the owners' requests. After they had tended to the animals brought to the clinic Mr HCA Arnot, inspector for the Boksburg SPCA, collected the two 'vets' in a light van and they went around the township picking up unwanted animals or animals that were in a terrible condition. These animals were then taken to the Boksburg Municipal Pound.

Oupa Tom and Johannes lived in Daveyton. The medical supplies they used were supplied by the Benoni Bantu Animal Protection Society. Miss MP Waddle was chair of the Society, which was located at 154 Princes Avenue, Benoni.[20]

land later used for new housing schemes. By the end of 1967 the streets in Galeview were renamed, and two streets in 'smaller' Reiger Park, Excelsior and Drommedaris Streets, had been tarred and the tarring of Middle Street had started.

On the business side progress was slow due to the lack of available land. Several businesses, including restaurants, fishmongers, butchers, fresh produce dealers and dry-cleaning businesses, had been opened by Coloured businessmen. "Here again it has been practically proved that the Coloured businessman, with guidance, has the acumen to make a success of his business."[16]

Probably in the spirit of the "Well established gardens are proof of the householder's pride in Reiger Park", the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* of 17 April 1970 reported on, and published an accompanying photo of the mayor of Boksburg handing a floating trophy to Mr RT Busby of Iris Street, Reiger Park for winning that year's garden competition.[17] We lived just across Mr Busby.

Reiger Park Extension 1, comprising two areas, was proclaimed at the beginning of July 1968.[18] The plans provided for an additional 500 residential stands. The estimated population of the 'greater' Reiger Park at the time was about 10 000.

In February 1970 the Council made land available for the construction of a post office. It also allocated seven church erven in Reiger Park Extension 1. These church sites were made available to the Full Evangelical Church of God, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Methodist Church, the Anglican Church, the Ebenaeser (*sic*) Congregational Church, the Reformed Church and the Baptist Church. In addition, an amount of R1 600 was voted for improvements to the Reiger Park Community Hall, to be used for curtains for the stage, a film screen, and venetian blinds for the windows.[19]

The Department of Community Development lent the Boksburg Town Council R503 400 for the purpose of building 152 homes in a section of Reiger Park Extension 1. The 152 homes in MM had

six different architectural designs and their prices ranged between R3 144 and R3 569. The rental/repayments varied between R24.93 and R27.51. The first two completed houses were handed over to their new owners/tenants in March 1970.[21] At the handing over ceremony the mayor, Mr CDS Smith, announced that the Single Quarters would be demolished in the not too distant future, to be replaced by a new sub-economic housing scheme. At the same event Mr CA September, chairman of the Coloured Consultative Committee of Reiger Park, said: "We are hoping the new high school will be completed by the end of the year [1970]." A year earlier Mr September had said: "Difficulties were still being experienced with the establishment of a high school in the township. Teachers for the proposed high school have already been appointed, but the building of the school had been postponed because of the 40 families living on the new school site."[22] The school was eventually completed four years later, by the end of 1974. I remember this vividly as the move from the old to the new high school took place during our matric examination in 1974 and we had to write our examination at the Reiger Park Primary school.

In April 1968 the house of Mr and Mrs W Jacobs of 131 Masalele Street, Stirtonville, was destroyed by a fire. The cause of the fire was a burst container of a paraffin stove. All that was saved was a dining room table, four chairs and a sideboard. The house built of brick, corrugated iron and ceiling boards was burned to the ground.[23]

Recreation facilities

Late in 1967 the Council made the old Beer Hall available as a temporary recreation centre. In addition, recreational equipment for children was delivered to be erected in Morgan Park in Galeview.[24]

One of the 'attractions' that was promised to the residents of Reiger Park was recreational facilities on the north-western side of the Cinderella Dam. The Department of Coloured Affairs allocated a portion along the Cinderella Dam in 1961, completely secluded from the other areas, for development as a recreational centre for (all of) the Coloured community on the Witwatersrand. The East Rand Yacht Club was situated on the southern side of the dam. In the beginning of 1965 a special committee was formed to deal with the administration of the funds donated and to advise on the proposed establishment of the recreational site. This committee comprised representatives from various government departments, council representatives and officials of the Johannesburg City Council and two from the Boksburg Town Council. It was decided that the Cinderella Dam de-silting project would not be undertaken as it would have been too costly. A swimming bath, playground equipment, kiosks and public shelters were among the amenities envisaged for the centre:[25]

> The Union Festival Committee donated a sum of R11 342 in 1960 to the development of this centre for the benefit of the Coloureds of the Witwatersrand. At the same time Johannesburg City Council donated R20 000. Over time these sums accrued a large amount of interest and the capital sum was augmented by R10 000 donated by the Transvaal and Orange Free State Gold Producers Committee.[26]
>
> The first scheme to be tackled was the building of a swimming bath, at an estimated cost R34 000. This was to be followed by an open-air dancing arena and amphitheatre with a stage. The laying out of picnic sites with the necessary amenities such as toilets, braaivleis sites and water supply would be next. The total cost of the immediate projects amounted to R45 500.[27]

The proposed recreation site on the shores of Cinderella Dam was finally given the green light by September 1968. The general plan also included two tennis courts, tennisette courts, children's playground equipment, miniature golf, an open roller-skating rink and a café.

A remainder of Cinderella Dam, envisaged as part of the Reiger Park recreational site (CH Morden, 2021).

In December 1968 an amount of R425 600, which was held in trust for the construction of the recreational site, was released at an official function in Reiger Park. The cheque was presented to Boksburg Town Council by Mr DA Pappas, Regional Representative of the Department of Coloured Affairs. It was noted: "Tenders will be invited early in the new year for the design and installation of a filtration plant and equipment for swimming and a paddling pool." The mayor and the chairman of the Coloured Consultative Committee expressed themselves as follows:

> The Mayor, Cllr Ben Steyn, said he realised that the many discussions, interviews and meetings regarding the project must have caused frustration. He hoped, however, that with the co-operation and hard work of all concerned the project would forge ahead. Mr CA September, chairman of the Coloured Consultative Committee, expressed the appreciation of the Coloured community and said that though Boksburg was leading the field on the Reef, he hoped the other Coloured centres would follow suit, as one centre would not be sufficient to serve the entire Reef.[28]

Sports, education, welfare and social life

The forced removals across South Africa during the 1960s caused many disruptions to the social, educational and various other aspects of people's lives in many communities. One area that was also negatively impacted was sport. After the move to Reiger Park the East Rand Coloured Football Association, which had been operating from its headquarters in Benoni for 38 years and built up its membership of active players from 35 to 520, virtually had to start all over again.

The Association covered an area stretching from Springs to Germiston and Edenvale. Chairman and founder of the association, Mr WC Clements, said the move of the Coloured community from Benoni to Boksburg had disrupted "and brought to a close" sporting life in the community. "In Boksburg we will have to start anew, with many problems and doubts in our minds", he said. He was not sure how many soccer fields the Boksburg Town Council would make available. The other officials of the association at the time were Mr T Henry, the treasurer; Mr A Adolph, vice-chairman and a founder member of the association; and two secretaries, Mr P Plaatjies and Mr E Smith.[29]

Sporting-related events in Reiger Park reported in the local newspaper during this period were far and few between. On 17 September 1965 the paper reported that the Boksburg Rotary Club presented the newly formed East Rand Lawn Tennis Association for Coloured players with four new tennis nets when they visited the Baker Park sportsground. Mr P Jemaine was the chairman of the Association.[30] On 26 May 1967 it was reported that an application of the East Rand Primary School Sports Union for the use of the Cinderella Compound Ground on 31 May 1967 was granted after an initial refusal to use the grounds on 20 or 27 May. The Boksburg Town Council's assistance was requested in this matter. Mr MF du Preez was the secretary of the union.[31]

A new portion of Baker Park Sports Field was fenced in and intended for use as an athletic track and a grass surfaced football ground.[32] This sports field was later renamed the WC Clements Sports Field.

The most outstanding footballer during the Eastern Transvaal Coloured Football Association's tournament over the Easter Weekend in 1972 was Bernard Olsen of Reiger Park's Pixie United First Division side. Basil Fisher was rated the most outstanding goalkeeper.[33]

In his contribution in Part two of this book Errol Fortuin elaborates on the development of soccer/ football in Reiger Park.

St Anthony's Library

One individual who contributed significantly towards the religious, social and educational developments in Reiger Park is Father Stan Brennan, who was the local Roman Catholic Priest of St Francis of Assisi Parish. In 1965, soon after he assumed this position, he initiated the construction of a library attached to the Catholic Church that was to be open to all in the community. The library was once a Standard 7 classroom of the St Albert's School for Black people at the Roman Catholic Church in Stirtonville. At the time there was no library in the area. After an initial appeal for books, about four hundred books were donated by the Boksburg public for the library.[34] After about six months of collecting books the library had about 2 000 novels, 12 sets of encyclopaedias, more than 300 children's books and about 500 schoolbooks.

The library was officially opened on 28 March 1966 by Miss Moyra Egan, the librarian at the Boksburg Library which at the time was open only to White members. In her address she said: "With this library you have the golden key that opens the enchanted door to so many things. A book is a friend that never deceives us, it is the medicine chest of the soul and with a book one is never lonely."[35]

The Chairman of the library board was Mr Alexander Hood, vice-principal of the Goede Hoop Laerskool. The other members of the Library Committee were Mr PD Jemaine, vice-chairman; Mr HHJ Harris, secretary; Mr A Kirkman, treasurer; Miss CJ Saldanha; Mrs MC Davids; Mrs D de Jager; Father Brennan; Mr VE Felix; Mr T Webb; Mr W Barnes; Mr AJ Wilhase; Mr E Adolph; Mr J Morley; Mr E Botha and Mr JDA Saldanha.

Mr Hood welcomed the guests and the guest speaker was Father AH Peterson, a Coloured Roman Catholic priest and principal at a private boarding school for Coloured boys, St Joseph's in Aliwal North. Others who spoke were Mr VE Felix, Mr BA Dlamini and Mr P Jemaine. Mr PK Pillay was the master of ceremonies.[36]

The library also served as a meeting place where discussions and debates were held. A reference library was available to all parents, teachers and children. Children were taught to acquire a taste for reading good books. Periodicals and newspapers of the world were always available. Educational films were shown regularly. A music group was formed, and piano lessons were given on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. The library committee also proposed introducing ballet, art and drama.

St Anthony's Educational Centre, including St Francis Catholic Church in the foreground (CH Morden, 2021).

Towards the end of May 1966 a music room was opened by the conductor of the ERPM Music Club Orchestra, Mr H Talbot, at the St Anthony's Library. At this event Mr Talbot led his orchestra through a selection of light classicals before an audience of about 350 packed into the St Francis Church hall. Miss Joyce Johnson was the library's music teacher. Mr Bill Woest, manager of a Boksburg store, provided the music room with furniture.[37]

From June 1966 tuition in the following matric subjects were offered at the library in the evenings: Bookkeeping (Mondays); Afrikaans (Tuesdays); Geography (Wednesdays) and Biology (Thursdays). English and Latin tuition were available on Saturday afternoons. Later, tuition in Shorthand and Typing was also offered on Saturday afternoons and German on Wednesday evenings.[38]

Towards the end of June 1968, two and a half years after the project was initiated, the St Anthony's Library was consecrated. The service was conducted by Archbishop Hugh Boyle, the Catholic prelate of Johannesburg. The mayor of Boksburg, Cllr Ben Steyn, performed the official opening ceremony.[39]

In July 1968 several valuable reference books were presented to the St Anthony's Library by the Standard Telephones and Cables Company (STC). The books were chosen for the library by Miss E Egan, an honorary librarian, after the offer was received from the company. By that time the library had a collection of about 20 000 books. The Sunday following this event Father Brennan left for Ireland for a few months.[40]

Social, welfare and sports organisations

By the end of 1967 the following organisations[41] were operating in Reiger Park:

- a Coloured Care Group of the South African Tuberculosis Association (SANTA);
- the East Rand Coloured Branch of the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA);
- a local Coloured Branch of the South African Service Legion;
- a local Coloured Branch of the Boksburg Welfare Organisation;
- the Reiger Park Coloured Consultative Committee;

- two youth clubs;
- a tennis union, to which several tennis clubs were affiliated, and
- two soccer unions, to which several soccer clubs were affiliated.

SANTA and the Red Cross Association had been providing services in Stirtonville prior to the removals and relocations in the 1960s. The Red Cross Association assisted with the first crèche/preschool in the area.

SANTA also provided a food parcel scheme to families whose members were diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB). In April 1966, at the request of SANTA, the Boksburg Town Council remitted rental totalling R1 462.49 owed by Coloured tuberculosis patients in Stirtonville. For so long as the TB patients were certified incapacitated by the doctor treating them, their rent arrears were remitted. Cllr Mrs Cora Geradi, serving on the town council, was also a trustee of the local SANTA.[42]

During the last week of May 1967 the Department of Health tested 2 500 Coloured children for possible tuberculosis at the three primary schools and one high school in Reiger Park. A test known as the Heaf test was conducted. The Coloured branch of SANTA held a cake sale next to the Reiger Park Post Office on 3 June 1967, and the proceeds went towards the fight against tuberculosis.[43]

One of the main annual fundraising events for SANTA in Stirtonville, which was also an important social event, was a debutant ball (discussed briefly in Chapter 4). SANTA continued with this annual fundraising event after Stirtonville became Reiger Park. Mr C September, chairman of the Reiger Park branch of SANTA, said in August 1967 that their plans for the annual debutant ball for that year was disrupted after the Boksburg Town Council refused the use of the Town Hall for the event. The Town Council was of the view that the event could be held in Reiger Park "where the recreation hall provides all the necessary facilities."[44]

Child welfare

In May 1966 the Boksburg Child Welfare and Aid Society announced plans to expand its operations in Reiger Park. The Society began negotiations with the Department of Coloured Affairs for the construction of a Community Centre in the township and a Coloured social worker was appointed. The acting chairwoman of the society, Mrs C Bezuidenhout, said that "poor relief" had reached relatively high levels because of the increasing number of Coloured people who had moved into Boksburg during the year.

During the financial year 1965-66 the Society found employment, through the Department of Labour, for all parents referred to it. There were 12 Coloured and 3 White job-seekers settled in employment by the Society. Alcoholism, according to Mrs Bezuidenhout, was still the cause of many social problems. The Society investigated 12 cases of neglect or ill-treatment of Coloured children and 24 cases of the same affecting White children. There were 14 "uncontrolled" Coloured children on the Society's books and 7 "uncontrolled" White children.[45] The Society also did its best to repair the interrupted home lives of 34 Coloured children and 7 White children. 35 Coloured children and 26 White children were placed under the Society's supervision, as their parents were unable to look after them properly.

The donors and fundraising efforts of the Society included street collections, a grant from the Town Council, morning markets, an event at the Germiston horse races, an event at the ERPM Cinderella shaft, jumble sales, a Spring festival, and the Mayoress Charity Fund.[46]

At its Annual General Meeting in May 1967 the Boksburg Child Welfare and Aid Society reported that during the past year Coloured women showed that they are keen to improve their own circumstances. The Society had two sales where goods made in a workshop and other articles were sold. A survey during the year showed that excessive drinking was at the root of many of the social problems. Twice as

many families as the previous year received food parcels at Christmas. The local Round Table donated blankets and clothes. Social workers placed 107 White and 185 Coloured people in institutions and mental hospitals during the year.[47]

In March 1969 the *Advertiser* described Stirtonville (Reiger Park) as a place of sunshine and shadow; sunshine for those who manage to make a living and support their families, and shadow for those unable to work and living on welfare food parcels distributed at the clinic.

The elderly Mrs Marta Stellenberg, one of those who tried to create a bit more sunshine in the world, had two foster children in her care, Lorraine and Maureen. She also looked after Lena van der Merwe, who was totally blind. She cared for them with lots of love.

Mrs P Wilfred was one of the people who lived in the shadows. She had ten children, one of whom caused many problems for the family. Her husband, who suffered from TB, worked only at irregular intervals. Mrs Wilfred occasionally received a food parcel from the clinic.

Gardens became showpieces and garden competitions were organised at regular intervals. Dogs were extremely popular pets, and care was provided by Oupa Tom Mhlongo who ran his weekly animal clinic on Tuesday mornings.

The Boksburg Child Welfare and Aid Society brought sunshine to those in need. Mrs J Devine started doing welfare work in the Coloured areas and said that the work could not be done without the aid of the public. Clothing, blankets, foodstuff and money were always welcome.[48]

In October 1970 Mrs E Murray of the Boksburg National Child Welfare (NCW) branch announced that a Coloured Family Care Committee, the first in the Transvaal, was formed in Boksburg during the year. The Coloured Committee was formed "as an experiment and was intended as the first step towards a separate child welfare society". This was the first group of its kind in the Transvaal and Mrs Murray said that the Department of Coloured Affairs was particularly interested in it, and "hopes to be able to use it to assess the extent to which Coloured people are able to accept responsibility for the welfare of their own people". The Committee also assisted the Coloured social worker, Miss Myra Daniels, who has been with the Boksburg Child Welfare and Family Care Society in Boksburg since December 1969.

She proudly said: "Unemployment is virtually a thing of the past as there is a great demand for Coloured workers in factories on the East Rand. This, however, has increased the urgent need for facilities for the care of the children of working parents."

Nineteen Children's Court cases were attended by welfare workers during the year and 38 children (14 White and 24 Coloured children) were removed from their parents' care. There were 34 White and 87 Coloured children under official supervision. "Rations were provided through the magistrate courts for seven white and 20 coloured families. A total of 1 329 interviews were conducted in the child welfare office and 800 visits made."[49]

The Reiger Park Coloured Advisory Committee requested that the Town Council consider building a crèche after complaints from working mothers that they had nowhere to leave their children while at work. After consultation with representatives of the Department of Coloured Affairs and Child Welfare, it was agreed that a crèche to accommodate 100 children should be built. The responsibility for the upkeep of the crèche would rest with the Boksburg Child Welfare and Aid Society.[50] In December 1970 the Coloured Workers' Union of South Africa donated R2 000 towards the building of a crèche in Reiger Park that was estimated to cost R50 000 and requested that factories and businesses employing Coloured workers also contribute. The Boksburg Town Council agreed to donate R5 000 towards construction of the crèche. The crèche was to be built on a site that was to be let by the Town Council for R1 a year.

Addressing alcohol abuse

In May 1966 progress on the activities of the East Rand Coloured Society of the South African National Council on Alcoholism (SANCA) was reported. The inaugural meeting of the Society took place on 7 October 1965, while some of its activities had already started in the previous month. The chairman of the Society was Mr M du Preez, a teacher at the Germiston Coloured High School. Mr A Hood, who taught at the Stirtonville school, was the vice-chairman. Advisory members were drawn from the committee of the Horizon Clinic for Alcoholics in Boksburg, which treated only White patients.

The Boksburg Town Council granted the Society the use of a six-room house in Stirtonville, No. 375, at low rental, which was to be converted into a SANCA information centre once the Society had raised enough cash to pay for the renovations and outfitting. Next door was a vacant stand on which, it was hoped, a clinic for the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholics would be built.[51] Mr V Knight gave frequent lectures to members of the local community on alcoholism.

By June 1967 the registration of SANCA Reiger Park as a welfare organisation was accepted, and the Society was only waiting for a Welfare Organisation (WO) number from Pretoria. The chairman, Mr Martin du Preez, appealed for volunteers as field workers to help distribute pamphlets and to spread the word about the work they were doing. SANCA Reiger Park was officially opened by the mayor, Cllr JF van B Serfontein in September 1967. Members of the committee at the time were the chairman Mr MF du Preez, the secretary Mr RC Billings, and treasurer Mr E Radcliffe. Additional members included Mr G Peffer, Mr C Smuts, Mr E Clements, Mr S du Plessis, Mr J Jansen, Mr H Martin and Rev A Pop.[52]

Youth development

The Reiger Park Youth Centre was officially opened by the mayor of Boksburg, Cllr Ben Steyn, in June 1968. The Youth Centre was formerly the Red Cross Children's crèche. Teenagers of the township voluntarily made improvements to the building. The official opening was attended by a large delegation of town councillors and officials. Also in attendance were the Reiger Park Advisory Committee's chairman Mr CA September, and his wife. Mr C Kavie, chairman of the Youth Centre Committee, said the centre would play a large part in keeping youngsters off the street. The Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade and the Olympians Youth Club made use of the centre. The unveiling of a name plaque and the opening of the door were performed by the mayor and Cllr Geradi.[53]

Education and social life

Sister Mary Vincent left Jan Smuts Airport, now OR Tambo International, bound for Ireland in early October 1967. Sister Vincent, a teacher and a nun, was awarded the first Department of Coloured Affairs' overseas study grant for teachers of physically handicapped children. She was a teacher at the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome, Cape Province. She visited her Stirtonville, Boksburg home and her mother, Mrs Helene Saldanha, who was in hospital recuperating from an operation, before leaving for Dublin.

The Saldanha family was a prominent Boksburg Coloured family, with quite a few of them being teachers. Mr Joseph Saldanha, father of Sister Vincent, was the principal of Actonville Indian Primary School. He and his family moved to Stirtonville in 1939. Sister Vincent gained her primary school teacher's diploma at Hewat Teachers' Training College, Athlone, in 1964. She was to study towards a special diploma for teachers of the deaf at the University College of Dublin and receive practical training at St Gabriel's School for the Deaf near Dublin.[54]

In October 1966 Mr RJ Triegaardt, a local teacher and deacon of the Ebenezer Congregational Church, addressed a large gathering in Reiger Park during a Boys' Brigade parade and said that the social and

The Miss Anglican Fete debutant competition

The *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* reported that the people of Reiger Park were upset about the outcome of a heated Miss Anglican Fete debutant competition, in which eight girls competed for the honour of wearing the crown at the Debutants' Ball in Reiger Park on Thursday, 24 August 1972. There was open muttering amid the applause when it was announced to a packed crowd at the Community Hall that two girls would be crowned instead of one. They were Shereen Simons and Denise Klow, daughter of the convener of the fete committee Mr Cecil Klow.

Confusion on the day of the ball, when all money raised was to be handed to the committee, led to a series of late donations by the two families concerned. "Both girls put a lot of effort into raising the funds, but some of the members of the families took the competition too seriously and became almost fanatical about the whole thing," said a parish member. The eight debutants who took part raised nearly R500, "which we think is very successful for a Reiger Park first debs' function".

Each debutant received a small gift and the two winning debutants a portable radio each from Mrs Joy Williams, wife of the rector of Boksburg, the Rev Brian Williams.[59]

moral decline of the township presented a challenge to the church, the family and to the whole of the Coloured community. He urged the church to also take an interest in the 'bread-and-butter' needs of their congregations. "We need the help of the authorities (e.g. police), but we must be prepared to assist ourselves. What of family pride? Has all parental control and influence been thrown overboard?" he asked. He challenged parents and teachers to increase the number of Coloured children studying for matriculation and university entrance.[55]

In February 1969 members of the Reiger Park Congregational Church welcomed the new resident minister, Rev J Diedricks, and his wife. Rev Diedricks was also appointed as the (acting) principal of the Oosrand High School. In his welcome address Mr RJ Triegaardt, who was also chairman of the church committee, stressed the need for greater sacrifice on behalf of all parents to keep their children at school as long as they possibly could. He lamented the fact that only four pupils matriculated in Reiger Park in 1968.[56]

A few years later, In April 1972, community members in Reiger Park expressed concerns about the lack of adequate educational facilities and the high dropout rates at schools. They said:

> [W]e have an unfortunate situation on the East Rand where factories take our youth with a standard four certificate. They offer salaries attractive enough to take them away from school, with the result that we have an effective drain on our education level… . We need better educational facilities and a minimum school-leaving level of at least standard eight.[57]

A magazine called *The Beam* was launched in March 1968 at the St Anthony's Club. The first publication, issued by the Committee of St Anthony's Club, profiled some of the community members in Reiger Park, highlighting some of their aims, cultural, educational and historical aspects. A copy of the first volume was presented to the retiring mayor, Cllr JF van B Serfontein, as a memento of the occasion. Master of ceremonies of the evening was Mr S Mentor. The publication was also to be the official mouthpiece of St Anthony's Club, established by Fr Brennan in 1966. The club, although attached and operating from the premises of St Francis Roman Catholic Church, was open to any Coloured person, irrespective of religion. Cllr Serfontein said the club was giving the Coloured community a new sense of their human dignity as well as a renewed reason for living. "It will help sow the seeds of much needed hope and confidence in a community which was just beginning to feel its way to establishment."[58] Later, when the magazine ceased to exist, Mr J Theys used

the name *The Beam* for a local newspaper he started, covering news in Coloured areas on the East Rand.

Another aspect of the social life was church fetes. As part of the annual Anglican Church Fete Mrs B Hendry organised one of the first Baby Show competitions in Reiger Park in October 1969. Winner of the section up to six months was little Veronica Adolph. Winner of the section six to 12 months was Karen Symons and winner of the section 12 to 18 months was Donovan Daniels.[60]

An excited crowd of about 200 Coloured children converged in the Youth Hall at Reiger Park on the morning of Friday 19 December 1969, eagerly waiting to receive their Christmas presents and refreshments from members of the Benoni Round Table. Children of St Dunstan's Primary School contributed new toys to the Benoni Round Table, who distributed them to the underprivileged Coloured children in Reiger Park. Mr J Tyrer and Mr R Myburgh were on hand to help distribute the toys.[61]

Crime and violence

Crime is an unfortunate but inescapable reality of most societies. Some of the main responsibilities of a functioning state are the maintenance of law and order, the administration of justice, and the rule of law. The nature and extent of crime might vary from community to community, but there are certain commonalities about crime. At the same time there are many differences in crime across various communities and it is important to understand what the main drivers of crime are, why crime might be more prevalent in some areas than in others, how to contain crime, and how to rehabilitate offenders. It is also important that the criminal justice system is capable of effectively dealing with all forms of crime and transgressions.

Deprivation, personality disorders, envy, greed, passion, jealousy, lack of parental supervision, peer pressure, power, and the desire for revenge are but some of the factors that might contribute to crime and the extent of violence that often accompanies some types of crime. Over the years the local newspaper has occasionally reported about crime on the East Rand, mostly theft, robbery, sometimes a fist fight among a few 'friends' that had too much to drink, and too often about a brutal murder.

A very gruesome murder was reported in Boksburg on 27 October 1964 when a young teacher discovered the decapitated torso of a middle-aged woman, covered in plastic, brown paper and a sheet, in a suitcase on the western shore of Boksburg Lake. The remains of her body, her dismembered legs and head, were later found in Wemmer Pan and Johannesburg Zoo Lake on 7 November and 17 December 1964 respectively.

Later, Catherine Cronje, who was certain that the victim was her mother, gave the police the identification of the victim as Mrs Catherine Burch. Almost a year later an inquest was held in Boksburg, where the verdict was given as "death unascertained". In August 1968 Catherine (then Mrs Van Coppenhagen) told police captain James Beeslaar of her suspicions. He reopened the case and started searching for the dead woman's husband, Ronald Burch, who was a local and had matriculated at Boksburg High School. In early 1965 Burch moved to 65 Berea Road, Bertrams in Johannesburg, where he lived with his widowed mother. On 27 November 1968 the police interviewed Burch's mother for a second time (the first interview was held on 4 October). She eventually broke down and admitted that he was in a room in the back yard and gave the police a key. When the police unlocked the door they found Ronald Burch, but he electrocuted himself as they entered the room. In May 1969 the inquest on Catherine Burch was reopened. Although the police had 'solved' this bizarre murder, the actual cause of death could still not be established and was recorded once again as "unascertained".[62]

While the above case had no links to Reiger Park/ Stirtonville, it does illustrate that crime and violence in Boksburg was not (and is not) unique to Reiger Park/Stirtonville.

The first serious incidents of and concerns about crime, including murder, in Reiger Park reported by the local newspaper was on 5 March 1965. Rev B Habberton, vicar of St Dunstan's Anglican Church in Benoni, under whose jurisdiction the Reiger Park/Stirtonville parish fell, called the area "a blot on the conscience of all decent people in town" and also argued that "contrary to all reports, the Coloureds' housing has not been renovated". He claimed that the township has deteriorated into a cesspool of iniquity with gangs roaming around terrorising the community. As evidence he cited the murder of 23-year-old Abraham Burd, who was butchered and hacked down in front of his home by a knife- and axe-wielding gang.[63] Three men, Gerald Klaasen (Big Fish, 28) Pieter Jacobs (33) and George Mokhotla (18) were later arrested for the murder of Abraham Burd on 24 February 1965. The men were believed to be members of the Vultures, one of the two gangs identified by the police that were mainly responsible for the increase in crime in Stirtonville.

During the middle of April 1965 magistrate Mr LV de Kock remanded nine Coloured suspects, including four minors, to appear in the Johannesburg Supreme Court to answer a charge of murder of a 24-year-old Coloured person in Reiger Park/Stirtonville on 5 February 1965.[64]

Official reports 'tried' to portray a rosier picture of the crime situation in Boksburg. In his official report on the Boksburg magisterial district the Chief Magistrate, Mr A Reinach, reported no significant increases in crime during 1964. The population of the Boksburg magisterial district at the end of 1964 was estimated at 80 500: 30 000 White, 7 500 Coloured, 1 000 Asian and 42 000 African people. During that year there were 9 163 prosecutions in total and forty-six cases related to murder, armed robbery and other serious criminal charges were reported. Mr Reinach expressed the view that Boksburg was among the most law-abiding towns on the Reef and Boksburg's Chief Prosecutor, Mr JC van Sweel, concurred.[65]

This 'rosier' picture was also painted by both the Boksburg Town Council and the Coloured Consultative Committee (CCC) of Reiger Park when they denied the claims by Rev Habberton that Reiger Park/Stirtonville was rife with murder, rape and robbery. Mr September, the chairman of the Coloured Consultative Committee, expressed his committee's "grave displeasure, profound shock and deep regret" at what he termed the "unfounded and unjust" allegations made by Rev Habberton. Boksburg's Town Clerk, Mr P Rudo Nell, said that every effort was being made by all the authorities concerned to maintain an orderly and law-abiding township. He admitted that there had been gangs in the township but these, he said, were being "systematically eliminated due to prompt police action". Mr Nell said that representation to the South African Police to increase patrols in the area was successful and that the number of Coloured constables in the township had also been increased. He added: "The Coloured population welcomes this opportunity to develop along their own lines and to live according to their own customs. The council welcomes the law-abiding Coloured and will do everything in its power to improve the amenities at his disposal."[66]

About a month later the Boksburg police placed the blame for the 'recent' increase in crime in Reiger Park/Stirtonville squarely on the shoulders of two young rival gangs identified as the Vikings and the Vultures.[67] The police promised to use every means at their disposal to eradicate the gangs at the earliest opportunity. They said that many unemployed youths had brought traditional rivalries into the township from other parts of the Reef. The local newspaper noted that "there has been a considerable increase in crime since Coloured people began moving into the area." In addition to the two murder cases previously reported "it is understood that the Boksburg Magistrate Court will soon begin hearings of a further series of murder, rape and robbery allegations said to involve members of these gangs".

The following crime incidents, all murders, were reported in the local newspaper between 1965 and 1969.

Pricilla Hlangwa appeared before Mr GG Smit in the Boksburg Regional Court at a preparatory examination into culpable homicide charges. She was accused of stabbing to death Elizabeth Jansen in Stirtonville on 10 April 1965 and was initially charged with murder.[68]

On the last Friday night of July 1965 Mr Vivian du Preez, the father of three small children and the sole provider of his family, was brutally stabbed to death near his home in Stirtonville while on his way home from work. He also cared for his ageing parents. Mr Du Preez had served on the church council of the St Mary Magdalene's Church in Benoni South. While in Benoni Mr Du Preez was a taxi owner and driver.[69] He had recently moved to Stirtonville and worked in the administrative offices.

In January 1966 the police again, surprisingly, reported a drop in the crime rate in Boksburg. According to Colonel PJ Lerm police patrols were stepped up, especially over the weekends and at night time. Special efforts had been made to control the criminal elements in Vosloorus and Stirtonville by having as many uniformed men as possible on patrol. In this way they were "preventing crime by deterring criminals rather than making arrests after crimes had been committed." He mentioned: "The last outburst of criminal activity that could be described as constituting a crime wave was the killing of five people in Stirtonville over a month ago", i.e. December 1965.[70]

On Sunday afternoon, 11 September 1966, Mr Jan Abrahams, of Tlale Street, Galeview, was stabbed to death during a party at his home. His assailant, who stabbed him through the heart, was known to the Boksburg Criminal Investigation Department (CID), though no arrest was made at the time of reporting.[71]

A Coloured man was committed for trial on a charge of murder and of possession of an unlicensed firearm after the fatal shooting of Hendrick Lionel Timmerman of 31 Single Quarters, Stirtonville, on 11 December 1969.[72]

The above reported incidents of violent crime clearly do not include all the incidents that occurred in Reiger Park during the period 1965 to 1969, but it does give an indication that crime was (and continues to be) a major concern. The gang-related crimes have long been about peer pressure, a sense of belonging for young boys with few or no role models, and protecting turf. It was not always clear what turf was being protected, but over the last three decades the sale of drugs has featured prominently.

Reports of violent crime that have emanated from Reiger Park have for many years often overshadowed the good that was happening there. In one instance in March 1968 the 'reputation' of Reiger Park as 'an unsafe' area nearly scuttled the performance of a well-known South African music group in the township.

Johnny Burke, leader of the music group The Invaders who became famous with their recording "Ice Cream and Suckers", was asked to perform at the recreational hall at Stirtonville. Due to national press reports on hooliganism and unruly behaviour of Stirtonville audiences The Invaders were not keen to include Stirtonville in their tour. Mr George Peffer prevailed upon Mr Burke, who eventually agreed to let the group appear but laid down several conditions. Among the conditions were a guarantee of R400 and full police protection. The protection involved an armed escort from the township boundary to the hall, a police guard during the performance and a safe escort back after the performance.

This was done, but Mr Burke stated afterwards that it was probably not necessary. He added that the Stirtonville audience was the best he had ever played before, and that he intended to 'correct' the wrongful reputation acquired by Stirtonville to the best of his ability. The Invaders also included

Dave Burke, Errol Gobey and Joe Moses. Mr Burke said that he would have no hesitation in visiting Stirtonville again and would, in fact, encourage other people to do so.[73]

What is clear is that 'turf battles' might have contributed to the initial battles among the various gangs in Reiger Park. Noor Nieftagodien asserts: "In the 1960s Reiger Park became a notorious haven for gangs, which were mostly formed by youth originating from different towns on the East Rand."[74] Many would argue that these 'turf battles' had less to do with where the youths originated from (in terms of which town on the East Rand) but more about the turf to trade various illicit goods, especially drugs.

Perceptions vs reality

Nieftagodien captures the views of some residents about the forced removals to Reiger Park during interviews conducted in 2000. According to him Valerie Klou expressed her dissatisfaction as follows:

> We did not like living in Reiger Park at all. We felt we belong to Benoni. Everybody knew each other, everybody was friendly with each other. For two or three years, everybody's nerves were on edge because when weekend came people did not know what would happen. And the gangs felt they belonged to Boksburg and we were the intruders.[75]

One ex-Benoni resident referred to the hostile relations in Reiger Park in the mid- to late 1960s and 1970s in a manner that reflected deep-seated prejudices that bordered on bigotry:

> We had trouble with the people from Germiston and Herschel. Benoni Coloureds were more cultured, even those who were living in the shacks (in Benoni) that got houses here (in Reiger Park) were people who knew jazz and culture. It is not that we want to degrade them but very few of the "others" were cultured. Trying to readjust to live with the different types of people coming in was not easy.[76]

Such forms of animosity and prejudice were unknown to me and I am sure to many who did not 'originally' come from Benoni, and dare I say even many originally from Benoni. That is not to deny that there had been, and still are, many fault lines running through the community, but it did not cut solely (or mainly) across divides that have territorial origins. Some of these comments allude to class 'divisions' that are prevalent in many societies and can be addressed through social and political interventions, with a focus on education. Experiences across the world also suggest that formal education helps to bridge class divides and enhance social mobility. Much has been written about the many divisions within Coloured communities throughout South Africa and possible reasons for these divisions. There is also much to say about that which binds these Coloured communities together, despite the adversities, rejections and discrimination they have to endure.

Prof Richard van der Ross expressed similar (collective) unhappiness because of the dislocations, but in a much more 'dignified' way when referring to those of lower social status:

> One of the great and inexcusable wrongs done by the Group Areas Act is that many families which were not well off financially, but which nonetheless formed well-knit communities with good standards of living, were uprooted and scattered. These families were then destroyed as communities. They were scattered among others, often a lower income group, but always strangers.[77]

The notion of having not been 'white enough' under the apartheid regime and not being 'black enough' in the 'new' South Africa might be baggage that many in the Coloured community carry. Although not intended to be a focus of this book, a bit more about this topic is discussed in Chapter 8.

In addition to being viewed as a 'minority' in South Africa, the lack of unity within the Coloured community (or divisions within the community, to

put it differently) and their frequent marginalisation (or feelings of marginalisation) might also reflect their 'divided origins', lack of economic muscle and limited entrepreneurial initiatives (there are obviously many exceptions), compared to the Indian (an even smaller) 'minority' community in South Africa. There is perceived to be a much closer bond within the Indian community in South Africa, probably given their more 'common origins'.

Negative perceptions of the safety situation in Reiger Park were to be repeated quite often in the media and journalist Zaid Khumalo did so in an uninformed and derogatory manner in 2016:

> like a cursed child in a dysfunctional family, detached from the rest of its family and siblings, Reiger Park has developed a fearful reputation as a haven for gangsters and has been torn apart by violent gang warfare. Many of the area's progressive young minds have relocated to other areas in search of greener and less violent pastures.[78]

The stories of various individuals and their families that are included in Part two of this book (and many others) will debunk the perceptions that Reiger Park has become a place to be avoided, one of blight and desperation. On the contrary, the residents of the greater Reiger Park have over the years managed to develop the area into a community of hope, one of resilience despite the odds. The schools in the area have produced learners that have made their community proud, and today many children from outside Reiger Park attend the schools in the area. The problems of gangsterism and unemployment have not disappeared and much needs to be done to address these social evils. The people of Reiger Park will not and dare not give up hope.

Dealing with crime and its consequences is neither easy nor straightforward. In his ruling which declared the death penalty unconstitutional in South Africa, Judge President Arthur Chaskalson of the South African Constitutional Court wrote on 6 June 1995: "The greatest deterrent to crime is the *likelihood that offenders will be apprehended, convicted and punished*. It is that which is presently lacking in our criminal justice system; and it is at this level *and through addressing the causes of crime* that the State must seek to combat lawlessness."[79]

A quarter of a century later it is self-evident that the South African society has made limited progress on both these fronts: substantial improvement to our criminal justice system and addressing the fundamental causes of crime in any meaningful way. Some might even argue that we have regressed in the case of the former and have paid lip service to the latter. The scourges of corruption, drug abuse and high levels of unemployment are fuelling the fires of crime and violence in South Africa. Unless and until we get a handle on these 'enemies', winning the fight against crime and violence, including 'white-collar' crime, will remain but a dream.

6

Colonisation and apartheid: On the same side of the coin or two sides of the same coin?

The history of South Africa since the early 1600s is on the one hand characterised by colonisation, divide and rule, apartheid, and exploitation. On the other hand it is one of hardworking and innovative people exploring and developing the vast potential and beauty of a country and its natural resources.

Slavery and colonisation have bedevilled and undermined the lives of many people of colour, predominantly in what has become known as the developing world (but also in the developed world) over the centuries. The basic right to human dignity, right to a decent life, sometimes even the right to life itself of many people were often denied and/or trampled on. Recent developments in the USA and elsewhere suggest that the ugly legacy of slavery, bigotry, racism and discrimination are persisting in many countries. George Alagiah, a British journalist who spent his formative years in Ghana after his family fled Ceylon, present-day Sri Lanka, in 1961 said: "in short, Colonialism, whatever mask it wore, was about power and control over people."[1] If I may add, colonialism was also about control over natural resources. Thus, notwithstanding some of the positives that might have resulted from colonisation – and many would argue there were none – e.g. international trade and mass education, the scars from this period of our history run deep and are constant reminders of the need to embrace, cultivate and embed a culture of human rights.

The decimation of much of the history and lives of the Khoi and San, especially in today's Western, Northern and Eastern Cape, is one of the hallmarks of colonisation in South Africa – not very different from the way the Aboriginal people of Australia, Native Americans and indigenous peoples in other parts of the world were treated. This denial of the human rights of people of colour was supported and enforced, in some instances tacitly, by most White people (Europeans) on the East Rand from the late 1800s until the dawn of democracy in 1994.

Given the context of this book the focus of this chapter will be on how the local newspapers on the East Rand (and in Boksburg in particular) reported

Editorial, *East Rand Express*

"One of the most important questions to be faced in the Transvaal is undoubtedly that of whether the white skilled labour is to be retained or banished. We make no excuse in approaching this matter because the policy of the *Express* has always been to advocate all measures which will lead to a happy and prosperous white population being settled within the borders of the Transvaal. To this end we fought Asiatic trading to a finish as far as the East Rand is concerned, and would now urge upon readers the necessity for attaching equal importance to the preservation of our industries for whites.

Local printers pay their white employees about three times as much in wages as the coloured men secure elsewhere, and although this may mean a slight increase in the charges to consumers, everybody benefits through circulation of money in the district. The same statement applies to other departments of labour; taking the building trade, the community is far better off if contractors employ whites rather than coloured men.

We are glad to see that at Wednesday's meeting the Boksburg Town Council took steps in the right direction by resolving that all contractors to the Council must pay wages at not less than the current local standard rates and employ only skilled tradesmen in the performance of skilled tradesmen's work. This means that coloured men are practically ruled out of local municipal work, because the great reason for the employment of coloured labour is always that the coloured men can be ground down to a rate of pay a white man would not accept."[2]

on politics and race relations from the late 1890s up to around 1972. In the 1890s and early 1900s it would appear that the authorities took as given that Black people on the East Rand would be confined to positions of unskilled, or at best semi-skilled, labour and that the focus of the powers that be was to ensure control over their movements, where they should reside, and that the numerical majority of Black people should not become a threat to the political power and control of White people. In the case of Asians, Indians in particular, White people feared their business acumen, which was seen as competition and thus a potential threat to their own businesses. It was for this reason that after the Anglo-Boer War, which ended on 31 May 1902, when there was a temporary shortage of unskilled Black labourers to work on the mines, the authorities decided to import contract Chinese labourers from May 1904, instead of making use of Indian labourers, as was the case in Natal in the late 1860s. The fact that Indians were regarded as British subjects (India being a British colony) seems to have been a deterring factor as there was a concern that Indians would have had "more rights" in the Transvaal. The experiment with Chinese labourers on the mines on the Witwatersrand was not very successful and most of them were repatriated to China by June 1907. The Coloured population on the Witwatersrand during this period migrated mostly from what was then known as the Cape Province (today's Western, Eastern and Northern Cape provinces). Their numbers were subsequently augmented by various 'inter-race' relationships. Given the Coloured population's relatively small numbers during the early 1900s they stayed, as a rule, in designated areas within 'Native' locations on the East Rand. These areas were sometimes referred to as 'Cape Stands'.

The attitudes towards Coloured and Indian people in Boksburg in late 1910 are reflected in an editorial of *East Rand Express*, a local newspaper, titled "The Coloured Menace". The focus was concern about White labourers having to compete with skilled Coloured labourers. It reads:

> We must apply to Coloured skilled labour the same tactics which enabled us to keep out the Asiatic trader. A list of all houses erected by coloured labour should be kept and prominently advertised for public information. Anyone occupying the same will doubtless be made aware that he is committing a social offence … Where there is a will there is always

> a way. If Transvaalers will stand united – Union or no Union – we can keep coloured labour in its place – at the Cape.[3]

By 1922 economic realities began to dictate policy and were forcing the mines to reconsider some of their employment practices. With the gold mining industry experiencing financial difficulties due to lower metal prices and higher costs (a scenario to be repeated many times in the future) the gold mines tried to reduce labour costs, which led to the mining strike in 1922. The Mining Houses placed an advertisement which read in part as follows: "With gold falling by the shilling a week and costs declining by the pence a month, the [mining] industry is galloping along the road to ruin at such a pace that nothing but drastic and wide-sweeping reform from Randfontein to Springs can save the Rand from industrial disaster of the first magnitude."[4]

In support of the mining bosses the local newspaper began to 'soften' its stance in advocating for the protection and interests of White workers by arguing : "It is becoming increasingly evident that the cause of unrest among miners is not so much wage reductions – though naturally they do not relish that – but the dread of the removal of what is called the 'Colour Bar'. There is no such proposal under consideration. All that is asked is that mining shall be cheapened by allowing certain classes of unskilled work, which have been preserved by regulation for Europeans, to be done by Native labour."[5]

Martial Law in Germiston, Boksburg and Benoni was declared in Government Notice No. 428 of 1922 by Lieutenant-General JL van Deventer on 15 March 1922.[6]

In the general election of 1924 Hertzog's National Party defeated the South African Party of Jan Smuts and formed a coalition government with the South African Labour Party, which became known as the Pact Government. In 1934 the National Party and the South African Party merged to form the United Party, with JBM Hertzog as Prime Minister and leader of the new party. He remained in power until 1937.

The Industrial Conciliation Act No. 11 of 1924 created job reservation for White people and excluded Black people from membership of registered trade unions. The Minimum Wages Act No. 27 of 1925 bestowed upon the Minister of Labour the power to force employers to give preference to White applicants when hiring workers, while the Mines and Works Amendment Act No. 25 of 1926 reinforced a colour bar in the mining industry, and excluded Indian miners from getting skilled jobs. These discriminatory social and economic policies pursued by the Pact Government helped pave the way for the "more formalised" apartheid state a few years later.[7]

Following the victory by the National Party in 1948, and in all subsequent Whites -only national elections in South Africa prior to 1994, the discriminatory practices of the past were enforced more diligently and rigidly. In April 1955 the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* reported: "Boksburg entered the vanguard of apartheid on Monday evening when the Town Council agreed to a recommendation that Natives be prohibited from entering local parks". By then "Johannesburg was the only other place in the Union where such an unusual step was being taken. The [Boksburg] Lake Park and Prince George Park were excluded from the ban, following representation from the Native Advisory Board, to allow Natives a place to spend their lunch times."[8] This event had sequels in late 1970 when the Boksburg Town Council received Ministerial approval to declare Boksburg "white-by night", and in late 1988 when the Conservative Party, which had taken control of the Boksburg Town Council, decided to (again) rigorously enforce the Separate Amenities Act (Act No. 49 of 1953) and reserve the Boksburg Lake Park and other amenities in the town for White people only.[9]

The authorities began to 'phase-out' discrimination in the labour market piecemeal and very reluctantly. One example of this was when,

in 1965, the Boksburg Town Council "strongly supported" a move by the Johannesburg City Council for the promulgation of a Coloured Building Workers Act.

> The Act provided for the employment and training of Coloured building workers in Coloured areas at rates of pay that will enable buildings to be erected by Coloureds for Coloureds, which can be afforded by Coloureds. The Town Council felt that the proposed Act would help to overcome difficulties with the Industrial Council and that Coloureds in the Transvaal would be encouraged to enter the building trade more readily than at present.[10]

The following incident and comments by a magistrate illustrate some of the challenges and indignations people of colour had to endure during the 1950s. On the night of 22 August 1952 Mr John James Francher, a Coloured man, was arrested on the premises of GG Laundry, Klipfontein No. 6, Boksburg, where he was doing some painting work. He was initially charged with being in illegal possession of liquor and pointing a firearm. A charge of working as a White man, as a shunter on the railways, was later added.

He was found guilty and in sentencing him Magistrate JG Louw said: "I feel that the court cannot give you a bigger punishment than that already brought on you by your acts. You have been degraded to your own class as a Coloured and you have lost your job." He cautioned and discharged Mr Francher on the charges of being in possession of liquor and sentenced him to £10 (or one month's imprisonment) for pointing a firearm. The revolver was confiscated, although it was licenced. Mr Francher's father was German and his mother's father Irish. His grandmother was Coloured. He was married in 1947 in a European Church at Primrose, and he and his wife lived in Benoni North with their six children.[11]

Between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s a raft of apartheid-era legislations were enacted and enforced with much vigour, enthusiasm and often brutality. In June 1955 the local newspaper reported on the likelihood of a shortage of domestic workers in the near future ("The luxury era of domestic servants, which has been enjoyed by [White] South Africa for many years, is rapidly coming to an end."), partly due to competing demands for labour by the manufacturing sector and the envisaged Native Trust policy (Homelands). The results would be that Black workers would be required to help develop the Homelands and that White households would have to get used to managing with fewer domestic workers.[12]

An incident in the centre of Boksburg Town in July 1956, reported under the headline "Mixed

Mixed dancing shocks Boksburg

It was about nine o'clock on Sunday evening and it happened on the corner of Commissioner Street and Trichardt Road – the recognised rendezvous of Boksburg's ducktail community.

A Native stood playing his guitar and lively melodies filled the air. From a distance the rhythmic shuffling of feet could be heard. About fifteen people: Europeans, Natives, and Coloureds – men and women – were jiving.

A young European girl, about 18 years old, was energetically going through the intricate paces – on the hand of an adult Native. Dust literally flew in all directions as the mixed group made merry in the early hours of the evening.

Passers-by stopped momentarily to watch the performance, shook their heads and walked on. One of Boksburg's prominent residents, a well-known businessman, appealed to the dancers to stop. There was no reaction. Sneering at the 'intruder', a girl said: "We enjoy it. Why don't you go home?" The dancing continued. Somebody mentioned the word "police". Within a few moments the street corner was deserted."[13]

dancing shocks Boksburg", hinted at what was socially possible if the powers that be were prepared to listen to (and learn from) the young and some of those on the margins of society. Another thirty-eight years had to pass before this scene in Boksburg Town could become a normal occurrence in South Africa. Yet the road ahead was not to be a smooth ride. As George Alagiah observed: "…racial bigotry has bestowed on this land [South Africa] a veil of bitterness and mistrust you will not find anywhere else. But now, in this new struggle for equality of opportunity, both black and white South Africans have a vested interest in finding a solution. The alternative is too depressing to contemplate."[14]

At the time of the fifth anniversary of the Republic of South Africa in 1966 the *Boksburg Advertiser* reflected on the journey of the Afrikaners in South Africa under the heading "The road to independence was a long, hard one":

> After having been left to their own devices for several generations, the Afrikaners of the Cape Colony suddenly found themselves under an alien government which advocated liberal policies they could neither comprehend nor accept. They experienced a shortage of labour as a result of the abolition of slavery. They were dissatisfied with the inadequate compensation for 'their' slaves they received, the British policy of encouraging missionary works amongst 'their' natives, and what was seen as a reversal of Sir Benjamin D' Urban's frontier policy in May 1825. All this prompted Afrikaners to pack up their belongings and go in search of a new land where they would be away from British influence and rule.
>
> Piet Retief is quoted to have said they were "in search of a new home where they could preserve proper relationships between master and servant". Between 1835 and 1838 about 12 000 dissatisfied Boer farmers left the Cape Colony with sheep, their cattle and Coloured servants in search of their haven of peace. By 1843 Natal was under British control. Around 1864 a large number of 'little Afrikaner communities' decided to forego their individualisms and factional differences and formed a republic, the South African Republic (Transvaal and the Orange Free State).[15]

The above edited version of the article is an incomplete summary of part of the history of South Africa, but it does capture the circumstances of, and the mood among Afrikaners at the time very succinctly. They subsequently dictated much of the political discourse of South Africa for most of the 1900s. Many decades later, a few years after the 1994 elections, Alagiah commented in 2001 that "too many among the white community were unwilling to reciprocate his [Nelson Mandela's] generosity. They liked the reconciliation part but were reluctant to accept the transformation that went with it."[16] In a different context but along the same theme, in their publication *Obedience and Servant Leadership*, Eugene Baron and Nico Botha write about efforts to unify the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) family of churches in South Africa: "Political developments in the country since 1994 seemed to have complicated the matter (the attempted unification) even further with new forms of racism, polarisation, fragmentation, corruption and decay emerging. South Africans are as divided as ever. In this context, the struggle for unity continues."[17] They offer a rather sombre, yet ultimately hopeful, view about likely developments in South Africa.

A lot transpired in South Africa (and elsewhere) from 1860 to the late 1900s that impacted the political and economic trajectory of South Africa: e.g. the discovery of diamonds and gold (1867 and 1886 respectively), the Anglo- Boer Wars (the first one from December 1880 to March 1881 and the second one from October 1899 to May 1902),[18] the formation of the Union of South Africa (1910), the two World Wars (1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945), the liberation struggles, forced removals (late 1950s to early 1970s), the Sharpeville massacre (1961), the detention of many political activists, the

assassination of some activists, many people going into exile (many professionals left the country on exit permits), the declaration of the Republic of South Africa (1961), the 1976 uprisings, the uprisings during the 1980s, South Africa defaulting on its sovereign debt in 1985, economic sanctions (during the late 1980s), the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the release of political prisoners and the unbanning of political parties (1990), and the first democratic election in 1994, to list but a few. Democratic South Africa, post 1994, has had its good days and more recently not so good days. Various contributors to this book touch on aspects of our recent past, the endemic corruption, the deterioration in service delivery, especially at municipal level, and the continued racial schism; but yet there remains a sense of hope that we will eventually overcome our numerous political, social and economic challenges.

A conservative political environment

On 6 September 1966 the Prime Minister and leader of the National Party, Dr Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd was assassinated, stabbed to death, by Dimitri Tsafendas. The local newspaper covered this event extensively and included numerous tributes. It said: "It was with profound incredibility and shock that Boksburg learnt on Tuesday afternoon of the assassination of the Prime Minister, Dr Hendrik Verwoerd."[19]

The next week the paper reported that official tributes have been paid by the Town Council, the Vosloorus Bantu Advisory Board and the Coloured community of Stirtonville. Rev CR Mayson of Witfield Methodist Church said: "Dr Verwoerd was mourned more than anything as a man of honesty, integrity and vision. It was during his premiership that the policy of apartheid was given moral backing."[20]

The Vosloorus Bantu Advisory Board unanimously carried a motion of condolence at a special meeting. The motion, proposed by board member Mr V Radebe, read: "The Bantu Community grieves at the passing of the Hon. Dr H F Verwoerd. We honour him as a man who secured for the Bantu his rightful share. Our sympathy is also herewith expressed to the members of his family and the Government."

A letter by Mr DG Cassell, of 918 Third Street, Stirtonville, addressed to Mrs Verwoerd, was published. It reads:

> Ek skrywe aan u om my innige leedwese aan u oor te dra met die afsterwe van ons geëerde Eerste Minister, dr. HF Verwoerd. In hierdie skrywe van my verseker ek u dat ek die gevoelens van my familie asook die van die hele Kleurlinggemeenskap van Boksburg oordra. Dit spyt my dat ek so lank geneem het om ons meegevoel oor te dra, maar wees asseblief verseker dat ons gedurig aan u dink in hierdie tyd van beproewing. Ons bede is dat die Allerhoogste met u sal wees en u voortdurend sal seën en vertroos.[21]

Notwithstanding the fact that one does not speak ill of the dead, especially at the time of their death, some of the glowing tributes are an indication of the relatively conservative nature of the political debate and climate in Boksburg, even among apparently "many" people of colour, during the 1960s.

This was also apparent in Benoni. During the 1940s and 1950s the Transvaal Indian Congress (TIC) was the dominant political voice in the Indian section of the old Benoni Location. This changed in the 1960s – during the time of forced removals and when the old Benoni Location, now named Actonville, became an Indian Group Area – when more conservative-leaning individuals took over the "political leadership" in Actonville. Messrs S Abram-Mayet and GR Moodley were the leaders when the government-initiated Indian Consultative Committee (ICC) was established in 1965. Mr Abram-Mayet, who became the first chairman of the ICC, was hailed as the "father of the people". In 1966 he tried to block the appointment of Mr C Daya to the ICC, especially for the latter's criticism of Mr

Abram-Mayet's public honouring of Verwoerd after his assassination.[22]

This political conservatism was later (in 1969) underscored by a "hard-hitting statement" by Mr September, newly (re-)elected chairman of the Reiger Park Coloured Consultative Committee. He "asks the Town Council to help the Coloured before they were swallowed up by other nationalities." He also said:

> The Coloured community in Reiger Park were entitled to a township of their own and businesses run by their own people. For the past four and a half years Indians and Chinese have operated businesses in the township. Is it fair to leave the Coloureds out in the cold? There are several Africans in the township and, although they are holders of Coloured identity cards, we regard this as an abomination and injustice towards the Coloured community. Indian and Chinese businessmen should be removed from the area.[23]

Mr Leon Ferreira, a clerk of the council and administrator for Reiger Park – and hence liaison officer between the Coloured Consultative Committee and the Council – was purported to have been a confidant of the people of Reiger Park. In 1970 he was quoted to have said: "The Coloured people haven't had a place in the sun for a long time, I will do my best to give it to them."[24]

The dream of Boksburg becoming 'White-by-Night'

In June 1969 the Boksburg Town Council initiated a process to have Boksburg declared 'white-by-night'. The 'elite' suburbs of Parkdene, Cinderella, Libradene and Farrar Park were to be first on the list. The intention was for this to eventually apply to the whole of 'White Boksburg', with the exception of the plots and small holdings.

Residents of these suburbs were said to be unhappy with this move. "This is absolute poppycock! Words simply fail me!" exclaimed Mrs JVG Middleton of Greenfield Street, Libradene. Mr George Binikos was equally upset: "If the Town Council had any real courage, they would try making the town not only white-by-night, but white-by-day; but they won't take the chance of commerce and industry rolling to a stop." His words took a 'prophetic' turn during late 1988 to late 1989.

Mrs N Whitter of Helzdingen Street said she generally coped well without a servant, "but I really think that women with small children should be considered before the scheme is made law." She said that when her children were younger, she found it almost impossible to cope if her servant was not in at night. However, Mrs Whitter felt that "the scheme would be a good one, in that it could possibly cut down on cases of crime committed by Africans during the dark hours."

According to the Town Clerk, Mr Rudo Nell, the White people of South Africa had been spoiled by African servants. He said that they would apply the scheme step by step, so that the council would be able to cope with each problem as it cropped up. "Our aim is to promote social and family life among our Africans. In town they are not allowed to have visitors at night, but when they are established in their own township, they will be able to lead fuller lives," he explained.[25] This was a clear and deliberate attempt to frame a measure put in place to protect white interests as if it would also be beneficial to the victim. This was not to be the only time when apartheid measures were couched in very flowery language. The Extension of University Education Act (Act No. 45 of 1959) did exactly the opposite of what the name would suggest.

The Transvaal Provincial Administration refused the initial application by the Boksburg Town Council to declare certain areas in the town white-by-night. It indicated that a more favourable view would be taken if the scheme applied to the whole of Boksburg. In October 1969 the Council decided that the whole municipal area would, subject to ministerial approval, be converted to the white-by-night scheme.

Housewives of the 'elite' suburbs formed an anti-white-by-night committee to work against the possible introduction of the scheme. The committee obtained 825 signatures for a petition objecting to the scheme, 91 of which were those of persons resident in other areas of the town. Mrs M Novitz of Shaul Street, Libradene, was the chief organiser.

The council assured residents that Africans would have to leave the town only for sleeping purposes. Businesses such as hotels, which required the services of Africans during the night, would be allowed permits to have their staff remain on the premises.[26]

Mr Nell, the town clerk, said too many Africans were to be found in Boksburg, who sit around doing nothing. "These are the people who are most likely to commit burglaries and cause trouble in the town." According to him other towns on the Reef had also considered or were already implementing white-by-night schemes.[27]

A Government Gazette notice of 27 November 1970, signed by the Deputy Minister of Bantu Administration and Education, Dr PGJ Koornhof, withdrew exemption from sections of the Bantu Urban Areas Consolidation Act. This paved the way for Boksburg to become 'white-by-night'. No Africans were to be on any premises or on the streets between 22:00 and 04:00. Only those carrying a special pass were permitted within the urban area during these hours.

The station commander at the Boksburg police station, Warrant Officer HC Nortje, said that "this initiative could reduce crime in Boksburg by more than 60 per cent, and although it is up to the Department of Bantu Administration to see that the new law is enforced, police will investigate all complaints received."[28] Boksburg's Member of Parliament (MP), Mr JP "Sias" Reyneke, said he wholeheartedly supported the white-by-night move.

Some residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision and the East Rand Progressive Party, chaired by Mr Peter Soal, planned protest meetings: "It is understood the matter will be discussed in full at the next Council meeting in January [1971]. It is expected that Cllrs Issy Kramer, MPC, MJ Hinckley and JM Cawood will launch an all-out attack at the meeting." Chairman of the East Rand Young Progressives, Mr Christo Binikos, said he expected mass protest meetings to be held.[29]

National politics in Reiger Park between 1969 and 1993

The National Coloured People's Party (NCPP) seems to have been the first political party that participated in the apartheid-era political structures in Reiger Park. This party, predominantly Transvaal-based, was initially led by Dr Clifford Smith of Johannesburg, who was later replaced by Mr C September of Reiger Park. A branch of the Coloured Labour Party in Reiger Park was led by Mr Simon Mentor, a local teacher who had been dismissed from his post and was subsequently employed in a factory in Boksburg. However, it was the Federal Party that won the Coloured Persons Representative Council's (CRC) seat on the East Rand in 1969.[30]

In an interview with Noor Nieftagodien, Mr Jac Rabie said that the Federal Party convinced him only a few months before the 1969 elections to leave his teaching position in Potchefstroom to contest the CRC election on the East Rand with Reiger Park as its main base: "According to Mr Rabie he did not even know where the place was, and it took him some time before he found Federal Party supporters in the area. At that stage the party was the weakest, but, as his opponents soon discovered, Rabie was ambitious and determined to win the seat."[31]

Mr Rabie exploited the divisions in the community while promising that he would deliver houses. He was able to ward off the threat posed by Mr September by accusing him, as the chairman of the Coloured Consultative Committee, of being responsible for not delivering houses and social amenities to poor people. He was also

House of Representatives, Tricameral Parliament, Cape Town in the 1980s.
The National Party Ministers' Council in the House of Representatives. Council chairman, centre, Mr Jac Rabie and Reverend Andrew Julies, left, Minister of Health and Welfare, are in front with Mr Patrick McEnery, Director General of the House. In the back row are Mr Pieter Saaiman, Minister of Local Government, Housing and Agriculture, Education and Culture; Mr Abe Williams, Budget Minister; Mr Gerald Morkel; and Mr Cecil Heradien, Deputy Minister of Local Government, Housing and Agriculture.

able to downplay his party's conservative politics by criticising Mr September's rigid nationalist position.[32] According to Nieftagodien

> it was the manner in which Mr Rabie dealt with the Labour Party that illustrated his awareness of the divisions in Reiger Park and his astute ability – or shrewd opportunism – to exploit

them. A central plank in Rabie's campaign was to accuse the middle-class residents of Reiger Park of having sold out their poorer neighbours. He constantly reminded his supporters that these were the people who opposed forced removals, but were the first to "grab the best houses". He thus used the "class card" to help him win. Rabie's

> criticisms of the established leaders of Reiger Park was successful because he was new in the area and was untainted by the '*destructive conflicts*' that characterised politics in Reiger Park.[33]

Rabie also successfully canvassed in the outlying areas of the constituency, which included all the areas on the East Rand, as well as the adjacent peri-urban and rural areas. His opponents largely ignored Coloured voters outside Reiger Park. From 1969 Jac Rabie won every election held in Reiger Park.

During the period 1969 to 1993 at least four individuals based in Reiger Park represented Reiger Park (and the East Rand) in national political structures: Messrs Jac Rabie, Simon Mentor, Cravin Collis and Izak Kruger, with Mr Rabie the most prominent and serving the longest on any one of these ever-evolving political structures.

The local newspaper reported little on national political developments in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The first time the paper made any reference to Mr JA Rabie was in March 1972. By this time "there had been indications of mounting unrest among political factions of the Transvaal Coloureds, including a recent announcement by the Transvaal section of the Labour Party that it intended withdrawing from the Coloured Representative Council as soon as possible." Jac Rabie was referred to "as one of the single most influential political leaders of Transvaal Coloureds". He was reported to have said "it was obvious that there was more disunity among Coloureds than ever before" and warned that "an intensive movement aimed at increasing this disunity was in action at the moment". A congress in Johannesburg was planned "in an attempt to settle differences among Coloured leaders and at the same time to formulate a cohesive plan of action aimed at unifying the aims of the different sections of the Coloured community."[34]

Jac Rabie died in hospital on Tuesday, 29 April 2008, aged 69. He was born in Middelburg, where his father was a court interpreter and his mother a domestic worker. When the family was evicted from their farm home under the Group Areas Act, they moved to Pretoria. Rabie entered politics as a member of the Federal Coloured People's Party (FCPP) after resigning from his teaching post in Potchefstroom. He was elected for the first time to the Coloured Representative Council for Reiger Park in 1969. Rabie resigned from the FCPP in 1975 and remained on the CRC as an independent until he joined the Labour Party in 1978. He later joined the National Party and also served as Minister of Population Development. He retired from politics in 1994.[35]

Democratic South Africa

In the period following the 1994 democratic elections the voters of Reiger Park predominantly supported the Democratic Alliance (DA), with the African National Congress (ANC) coming a distant second. The 2021 municipal elections witnessed a significant shift in voter sentiments, with the Patriotic Alliance (PA) winning most of Reiger Park (ward 34) with 37,2% of the votes, followed by the DA with 26,2% and the ANC with 17,9%. In the 2016 municipal elections the DA won the ward with 65,0% of the votes followed by the ANC with 24,3%. The shifting voter sentiments in 2021 might partly be due to the DA fielding a new (relatively unknown) candidate, the retirement of the previous ward candidate, and the PA fielding a known community worker. It is also noteworthy that the PA did relatively well, compared to the 2016 municipal elections, in other previously (predominantly) Coloured areas, especially in Gauteng. In the 2019 National and Provincial elections the DA obtained 63,8% of the vote and the ANC 18.3% in ward 34.

7

Reiger Park in the headlines

The primary sources of the 'factual' historical overview of the establishment of Boksburg's townships are the *East Rand Express* and later the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*. These settlements include the 'old' Native Location and the adjacent 'old' Asiatic Bazaar (Kalamazoo) in the late 1890s; the 'new' Native location, later named Stirtonville; and the adjacent 'new' Asiatic Bazaar in 1908; and the declaration of both areas as a Coloured Group Area and being renamed Reiger Park in the 1960s. The overview as documented in the previous chapters covers the periods 1904 to 1923 and 1946 to 1972. The periods 1924 to 1945 and after 1972 are not covered in any detail, the main reason being that the two periods covered deal effectively with the establishment of the historical 'roots' of the area called Reiger Park. The *East Rand Express* ceased operations in December 1936 and after World War II, in 1946, the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* was launched. During the 1920s other local newspapers on the East Rand, such as the *Benoni City Times*, were also launched.

The second half of this book comprises individuals' contributions of their personal experiences of moving to and resettling in Reiger Park. Some of the contributors lived in Stirtonville long before it was declared a Coloured Group Area. Many of these contributions cover the period after 1972. There are, however, a few developments and/or incidents in Reiger Park and Boksburg that happened after 1972 that warrant further elaborations: the 'unrest' in Reiger Park in 1981, the consumer boycott in Boksburg in 1988-1989, the 'establishment' of two informal settlements in Reiger Park around the early 1990s, and the xenophobic attacks in these informal settlements in 2008.

The 1981 unrest in Reiger Park

I taught Economics and Mathematics at Oosrand High School in 1980, my first year as a teacher. At the beginning of 1981 I was appointed as a lecturer at the Peninsula Technikon in Bellville, today part of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Later that year I had to read from afar that Reiger Park was burning. I kept a file of newspaper clippings

from *Ekstra-Rapport*, 17 and 24 May 1981 and the *Sunday Times Extra*, 17 May 1981 over the years. Later I got hold of a pamphlet that was distributed in Reiger Park a few days before that eventful weekend of 8 to 10 May 1981.

What became clear from most credible newspaper reports and comments by various leaders from the community was that the underlying reason for the unrest in Reiger Park in 1981 was a lack of adequate housing. The newspapers quoted both Mr Jac Rabie, member of the Tricameral Parliament (House of Representatives), and Mr Abdullah Mohammed, member of the Reiger Park Management Committee, as having said that the underlying reason for the dissatisfaction was the lack of housing. Nevertheless, some reports ascribed the unrest mainly due to racial tensions.

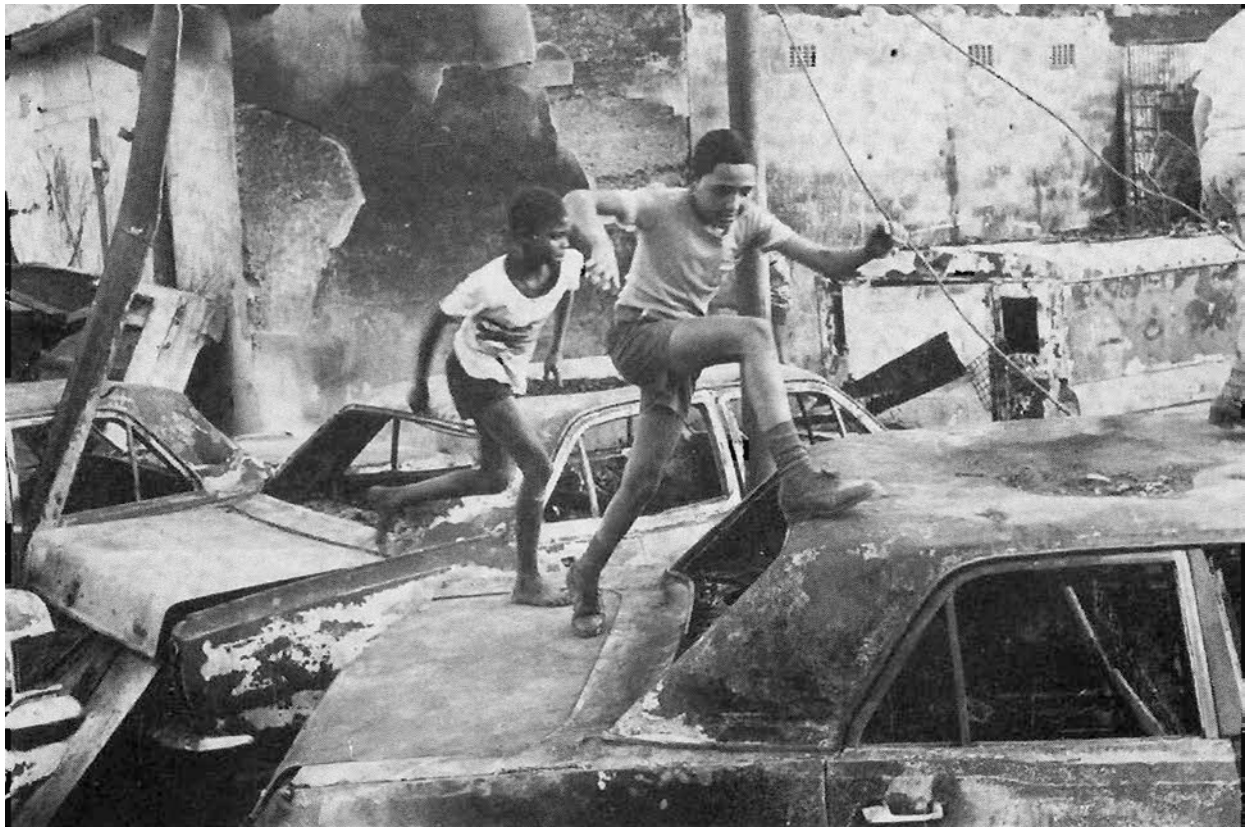
The pamphlet that was distributed just prior to the events over the weekend of 8 to 10 May 1981 indicates that the focus by then had shifted to the Gangadin family. They were of Indian descent and owned a number of businesses in Reiger Park, including a number of taxis. Messrs Frank and Abe Gangadin appeared to have been particular targets.

Several people were injured during the unrest including Mr Jac Rabie, who was shot. From his hospital bed he penned an article that appeared in the *Ekstra-Rapport* of 17 May 1981. From his article, and reports by Mohamed Shaikh in *Ekstra-Rapport* and Boeti Eshak in the *Sunday Times Extra* on 17 May 1981 the events leading up to the unrest can be summarised.

A shop owned by the widowed Mrs Oliver Reed was damaged in a fire sometime in 1979. Her late husband was of Indian descent. The shop, Loonat's Store, was one of the shops dating back from the 'new' Asiatic Bazaar that was established adjacent to Stirtonville in late 1908. Most of the shops in the area were owned by Indians; there were about fourteen Indian and two Chinese traders. When Coloured people moved to Stirtonville/Reiger Park in 1964 a few Coloured traders opened shops in the area, but all the Indian and Chinese-owned stores remained. Thus, for many years, most of the shops in Reiger Park were owned by Indian people. Boeti Eshak[3] reported that the reason for the delay in moving Indian traders from Reiger Park to Actonville, Benoni, was that Actonville was by then overtraded and the authorities were exploring alternatives to accommodate Indian traders from Boksburg, including those in Reiger Park. One option under consideration was an Oriental Plaza on the border between Boksburg and Benoni, similar to the one in Klerksdorp. Discussions for such a plaza were held as far back as 1970, but by the early 1980s there were no indications of any progress in this regard.

The area around Loonat's Store was earmarked for residential development and it would appear that this was communicated to the residents of Reiger Park. On 7 April 1981 the Town Council and/or the Reiger Park Management Committee decided that Loonat's Store should be demolished and the construction of 52 houses would commence in June 1981. At the end of April 1981 residents noticed

BOIKOT! BOIKOT! BOIKOT! BOIKOT! BOIKOT!
BOIKOT! BOIKOT! BOIKOT! BOIKOT!
VIR JOU EIE VEILIGHEID VRYDAG IS LYDAG
VIR GUNGADINE[1] 8 MEI 1981.
ONS PYN IS VIR HOM NET SKYN
ONS KINDERS KAN HY STAMP MAAR BETAAL
SAL HY NIE
DIE BOESMANS VAN REIGERPARK IS SY
SKROPLAPPE
ONS DRYWERS HEL HY OP SONDER OM TE STOP
REWOLWERS HET HY BAIE OM ONS MEE TE
DREIG
MAAR NOU IS DIE UUR, DIE SKRIF IS OP DIE
MUUR
VERSEKER IS JY NIE SODRA JY IN SY TAXI RY,
WANT IN GUNGADINE SE TAXI GAAN
JY JOU DOOD NOG KRY EN ALPHA[2] IS NIE
VERNIET.
AS JY GUNGADINE ONDERSTEUN VERRAAI JY
JOU GEMEENSKAP
REIGERPARK ONTWAAK DIT IS AMPER TE LAAT
UNITY IS STRENGTH!



Children playing on the burned-out cars of taxi owner, Abe Gangadin, 24 May 1981 (© Biddy Partridge, 1981).

that instead of being demolished, Loonat's Store was being renovated. Blame for this development (effectively inaction) was shifted between the Boksburg Town Council and the Department of Community Development. Residents held a demonstration in front of Loonat's Store on 2 May to express their dissatisfaction. It would appear that one of the Gangadin brothers, Abe, had some involvement with the store. He drove past the protesters showing his displeasure with the demonstration, in what was said to be an aggressive manner. This confrontation sparked further demonstration and a call to a boycott of his taxis as per the pamphlet that was distributed later that week.

The shop of Mr Simon Mentor, a member of the President's Council, was also gutted. Aziz Phillips (14) was killed by a bullet on Saturday 9 May. He and his father, Dennie Phillips, were observing the protests in the next street, Clarence September Street, from their backyard. As the crowd was moving up the street in their direction, running away from the police, Mr Phillips decided to go into his house and called his son. The police fired shots in the direction of the crowd and before his son could respond to his father's call, he was shot in the back. Aziz was in standard five (grade seven) at Goede Hoop Primary School. Thomas Damons, 19 years old, was shot and killed on the Sunday at around 10:30, close to Tip-Top café. He was the eldest son in the family and the breadwinner. Both the victims were buried on 17 May from the Free Baptist Church. The service was led by Pastor Isaac Lakay.

A total of 30 people were injured over the weekend. They included Morris Africa (27), Arthur

Mnr. Jac Rabie skryf uit sy hospitaalbed

Huisvesting is die hoofoorsaak vir die onaangename gebeure wat Reigerpark in die Moedersdagnaweek in chaos, ellende en rou gedompel het. Reeds in 1971 het ek as VKR-lid in 'n skrywe aan die Stadsraad van Boksburg gemeld dat daar 1 125 gesinne vir huisvesting wag en dat dringend hieraan aandag geskenk moet word. Niks is gedoen nie en vandag staan die amptelike waglys op 2 250. Diegene wat hierdie uiters treurige gebeure wil toedig aan rassebotsings tussen Indiërs en Kleurlinge tree uiters onverantwoordelik op.

Op erf 379, residensieel geproklameer, moet huise gebou word. Op een hoek van hierdie erf staan 'n winkel wat uit vergange dae dateer. Die winkel behoort aan mev. Oliver Reed, 'n Kleurlingvrou, en glad nie aan 'n Indiërman, Abe Gungadin, nie. Na 'n brand by die winkel is mev. Reed later R3 000 uitbetaal deur die Reigerparkse Bestuurskomitee. Daar word nou ewe skielik massiewe verbeterings en herstelwerk aan die winkel gedoen.

Op 7 April 1981 het die Bestuurskomitee besluit dat die gebou gesloop moet word, maar daar is nooit uitvoering aan die besluit gegee nie. Op 2 Mei 1981 was daar 'n plakkaatbetoging om die gebou om te vra vir die sloping daarvan. Tydens die betoging het mnr. Abe Gungadin na bewering deur die betogende skare gejaag en so byna 'n seun ernstig beseer. Daar is 'n pistool uitgepluk en vyf skote is afgevuur.

Mnr. Gungadin se motor is met petrol besprinkel en die ruite met 'n hamer stukkend geslaan. Hy het toe neerhalend dinge van die Kleurlinge kwytgeraak. Die daaropvolgende week is 'n pamflet versprei wat die gemeenskap oproep tot 'n boikot van sy taxi's. Die boikot was blykbaar in die kol. Saterdag is taxi's van Kleurlinge beskadig, bestuurders aangerand en daar is op hulle geskiet. Dit was 'n verdere vonk in die kruitvat. Die inwoners het die winkel en die geboue wat deur Gungadin beheer word, aan die brand gesteek. 'n Skietery het gevolg. Klipgooi en brand het na ander Indiërwinkels versprei.

Oral deur die land is verhoudinge tussen Bestuurskomitees en Stadsrade aan't verbrokkel, alles omdat daar nie ag geslaan word op vertoë wat deur Bestuurskomitees gerig word nie. Aan die relevante owerhede net dit: Slaan ag op die stemlose mense se regverdige vertoë, veral as politiek nie ook daarby betrokke is nie. Of is dit ydele hoop! Reigerpark is aan die brand. Droewige verhale.[4]

Alvan (35), John Bromnice (32), Peter Caliwitz (24),Ruben Chardyan (19), Elvis Denise (23), Aubrey Dick, Selwin du Preez (24), Lillian Hermanus (17), Neville Jansen (26), Catherine Jacobs (23), Jan Jacobs (27), Magdelene Jacobs (19), Irwin Julius (14), Cornelius Klaaste (22), Henriette Peter (23), Stanley Pop, Jacobus Rabie (51), Jan Ratcliffe (28), Wayne September (27), Reaben Silinda *(sic)* (25), Andrew Speelman (27), Keith Thompson, Peter Trollip (54), Nathan van Niekerk (16), Charles van Wyk (19), Nathan van Wyk (16), Maureen Webster (13) and Koos Wilskit (38).[5]

A report in *Rapport* of 17 May 1981 referred to "toothless management committees" and empty promises as contributing reasons for the dissatisfactions, not only in Reiger Park, but across the country. This assessment is reflected in the 'frustrations' as articulated in an article, in the same edition of the paper, by Mr Jac Rabie. Yet Mr Rabie continued to serve on bodies that had very limited positive impact on the daily lives of the oppressed people of South Africa and by default helped to perpetuate white minority rule. His experience was once again testimony to the fact that the powers that be had very little regard for dignity and humanity of people of colour and treated even those who attempted to cooperate with them with disdain. It took concerted efforts, at both local and international fronts, to edge South Africa towards a democratic future. In 1990 Mr FW de Klerk, the State President and leader of the National Party, saw the writing on the wall and took the bold step to release Mr Nelson Mandela unconditionally, thereby rescuing South Africa and its citizens from a path to economic ruin and possible civil war.

Boeti Eshak on the events of 17 May 1981

On Friday 8 May at around 06:00 pm, a group of cars arrived at the taxi rank at the East Rand Railway Station, allegedly blocking Mr Abie Gungadin's (sic) taxis, making it difficult for passengers to get into the combis. Four of Mr Gungadin's taxis were damaged by stones. At 08:00 pm a crowd assembled in front of Loonat's shop. Mr Gungadin's taxi yard was next to it. Stones and bottles were thrown at the shop.

On Saturday 9 May , at 02:00 pm at East Rand Station, a stone-throwing mob gathered at the taxi rank and allegedly attacked Indian taxi owners.[6] After 06:00 pm rioters set fire to Loonat's Store and vehicles in the yard, and as the crowd grew to about 1 000, other shops, houses, and vehicles were set alight. These included Bham's Food market and five of his cars, and houses and 10 vehicles belonging to Mr Gungadin. More than 100 policemen entered the township. Shots were fired. Aziz Phillips was killed. A number of people were injured, including Messrs [Jac] Rabie and [Aubrey] Dick. Sabiers Store and Kismet Stores were razed to the ground.

Sunday afternoon 10 May 1981, Fransch Garage's workshop and 15 cars, (A) Nanabhay's Grocers, Tip Top Stores, Reiger Park Supermarket and Café (belonging to Mr Simon Mentor), ME Nanabhay's, Salon Shameera, Mollas and Dr Kamala Patel's consulting rooms were set alight. Jenkies Dairy (belonging to the Gungadins) was looted and then burned. Twenty-one milking cows, 10 calves and three bulls were slaughtered. Thomas Edward Damons, 19, was killed.

Monday 11 May , a portion of the Administration Board offices was set alight. Wadees shop was burned. Tuesday 12 May , two more Indian shops and Dr EM Ebrahim's surgery were razed to the ground. Mokoti Cash Store and Sue Ellen's store, both belonging to Chinese traders, were burned.[7]

The consumer boycott of 1988–89

In 1982 the conservative wing of the ruling National Party broke away to form the Conservative Party under the leadership of Dr Andries Treurnicht. On 26 October 1988 the Conservative Party won 12 of the 20 seats on the Boksburg Town Council, in the Whites-only municipal elections. In November 1988 the Town Council decided to (re)implement the Separate Amenities Act, Act No. 49 of 1953, (i.e. petty apartheid). People of colour were once again barred from making use of the Boksburg Lake, swimming pools, and other amenities in Town.

These decisions by the Management Committee were endorsed at a meeting of the Town Council of Boksburg on 24 November 1988.

In reaction the residents of Reiger Park at a public meeting on Wednesday 30 November 1988 called for a consumer boycott of all businesses in Boksburg Town. Soon thereafter the residents of Vosloorus joined the consumer boycott. Most of these shops were owned by White people. The boycott took effect the next day, Thursday, 1 December 1988, and lasted for close on a year. By April 1989 the council had almost completed fencing Boksburg Lake at a cost of R140 000, in order to keep out Black people. The Save Boksburg Committee, which co-ordinated the consumer boycott in Reiger Park, called off the boycott on Friday 17 November 1989, a day after President FW de Klerk announced that the Separate Amenities Act, which allowed the Conservative Party to reintroduce petty apartheid, would be repealed as soon as possible after Parliament reconvened in February 1990.

Mr Mahomed Navsa, later an Appeal Court judge, was chairperson of the Save Boksburg Committee. Another senior member of the Save Boksburg Committee was Dr Billy Jacobs, who was also president of the East Rand Alumni Society (ERAS) during 1988-89. In his address to the Annual General Meeting of the ERAS on 24 June 1989 Dr Jacobs had this to say about the Save Boksburg Campaign:

> Members of the society played key roles in the Save Boksburg Committee and are still very active in the campaign. The highly pressurised nature of our community's strong stand against racism

The minutes

The minutes of the Boksburg Town Council Management Committee meeting dated 14 November 1988 reflects the following decisions:

(i) That access to the Boksburg Lake and the recreational area around the lake be reserved for whites only;

(ii) That all tennis clubs in Boksburg utilising the Council's tennis courts, excluding the Reiger Park Tennis Club, be instructed to restrict their membership to whites only;

(iii) That no multi-racial sporting events be held in any of the public swimming pools in Boksburg, excluding the public swimming pool in Reiger Park;

(iv) That the City Hall and all other Halls owned by the Boksburg Town Council, except those in Reiger Park, be reserved for whites only;

(v) That the decision of the Council regarding the proclamation of free-trading areas in Boksburg, dated 28 November 1985, 24 April 1986, and 27 August 1987 be rescinded; and

(vi) That the lease agreement for the Lake Kiosk, known as The Golden Lake Chinese Restaurant, be amended to state that only whites will be allowed at the kiosk (Restaurant) and that the owner Mrs SY Yip be informed of the Council's intention of fencing the lake grounds.[8]

> in Boksburg was bound to have an effect on the functioning of our organisation. However, it is heartening to know that members of this society, who have often been accused of elitism, are in the vanguard of this struggle. There is very little doubt that our participation in the campaign brought to it the special skills and expertise which are the strength of the Alumni. We are committed to remain part of the campaign for as long as it takes our community to fend off this latest assault on our human dignity in order to proceed to the next stage, which is to claim our rightful place as full citizens of Boksburg and South Africa.[9]

The impact of the consumer boycott on retail outlets in Boksburg was significant, especially the timing of the boycott, which commenced in the weeks leading up to the 1988 Christmas shopping period. The year-long consumer boycott in Boksburg received extensive national and international press coverage and the support of a number of multinational companies based in Boksburg and other towns on the East Rand. These multinational companies, mostly American, had earlier decided not to respond to the call for international sanctions against South Africa and now used this event as an opportunity to partly justify their continued presence in South Africa, by providing financial support for the logistics to the Boksburg consumer boycott. Such companies included Colgate-Palmolive, American Cyanamid, Unilever and others. I recall attending one of the meetings arranged by the Save Boksburg Committee on the premises of Colgate-Palmolive in Boksburg.

The minutes of a special meeting of the Management Committee of the Town Council of Boksburg held on 9 December 1988 noted that the Town Council received seventy-three letters of support and thirty letters in opposition to their decisions taken during the previous month. Seven of the letters opposing these decisions were attached to these minutes; they were from The Boksburg Industrialists' Association; Quanta Group CC; Catholic institutions; TE Neville; Colgate-Palmolive (Pty) Ltd; Merinda Enterprises, and Boksburg Foundry. The minutes also included proposals by members of opposition parties on the Town Council, calling for a special meeting of the Town Council to reverse these decisions. The request for such a meeting was dismissed on technical grounds. The

minutes included a decision to ban the placement of advertisements by the Town Council in the *Boksburg Advertiser*, presumably because of the coverage given of the negative reactions to the Council's decision to reintroduce various petty apartheid measures. Colgate-Palmolive (Pty) Ltd wrote two letters to the Town Council, both dated 5 December 1988, requesting that their premises in Boksburg be re-zoned and incorporated into Benoni.[10]

The Boksburg Alliance issued "The Boksburg Declaration" on 1 December 1988 in which it strongly opposed the "discriminatory policies of the Town Council of Boksburg" and bemoaned the "boycott actions aimed at moderate Boksburg citizens." The Management Committee of the Boksburg Town Council took strong exception to the contents of "The Boksburg Declaration" and threatened legal action. The Reiger Park Management Committee, a body that had very little support in Reiger Park, also protested the actions of the Town Council and as a symbol of their opposition adjourned their meeting on 10 January 1989 to 7 February 1989. Instead they held a press briefing where they expressed their displeasure with the decisions of the Town Council. In reaction the Management Committee of the Town Council recommended that some of the delegated powers of the Reiger Park Management Committee be withdrawn.[11] Just over a year later, on 5 March 1990, five members of the Reiger Park Management Committee tendered their resignations. They were: J Arends, P Lottering, B Jantjies, P Plaatjies (Snr) and E Hansrod.[12] Some of the reasons they gave for their resignations were: (i) It became clear that the ideals of the Coloured Community (of Reiger Park) would not be realised under the rule of the Conservative Party; ""Boksburg Town Council had ignored many of the decisions and recommendations by the Reiger Park Management Committee; (iv) They noted that they were not under pressure from any other institutions or organisations to resign; and (v) They demanded that all discriminatory legislation relating to local governments should be abolished and that all residents of Boksburg be governed by one Town Council.

The Town Council responded to the two-page resignation letter of these members with an eight-page reply, which was also sent to the House of Representatives and the Director General of the Transvaal Provincial Administration. The Council also decided that the Management Committee of Boksburg should take over the powers of the Management Committee of Reiger Park until the vacancies left by the five were filled in an election that was scheduled for 16 May 1990.

The events of 1988-89 forged a degree of unity in Reiger Park that few fully appreciated at the time. Gone was much of the negative news from Reiger Park that used to make the headlines. Even those that over the years tried to work with the apartheid regime to administer the locations/townships (Reiger Park and Vosloorus) threw their full weight behind the consumer boycott.

In their first newsletter (undated, but probably issued towards the end of March 1989) the Save Boksburg Committee (*Red Boksburg Komitee*) said that our struggle was about our human dignity *(menswaardigheid)*. "Julle wil Boksburg wit gehad het. Julle het hom wit gekry." ("You wanted Boksburg white, we gave it to you white"). The newsletter referred to efforts during the first few months of 1989, supported by the private sector, to secure basic foodstuffs and school clothing in bulk, which were then sold by shops in Reiger Park at prices competitive to those in the bigger shops in town. The Committee thanked the local taxis for their support in ferrying shoppers to the surrounding towns, Benoni and Germiston. In addition, buses were secured to transport shoppers. The newsletter stated: "Our community has never been as united before – we dare anyone to contradict this. Our actions have sent a clear unequivocal message to the Conservative Party and others – genoeg is genoeg! [enough is enough!]"[13]

In retrospect the Boksburg consumer boycott helped to expedite not only the demise of the Separate Amenities Act, Act No. 49 of 1953, but it probably also contributed to the beginnings of the end of the Group Areas Act. Late in 1989 the National Party issued a "Five-Year Plan of Action", suggesting that the government would maintain residential areas according to the Group Areas Act of 1966 in a firm, yet sensitive, manner until an acceptable alternative method could be put into practice. In November 1989 the first four "free settlement areas" (where people of all races could legally reside) were announced. They were Zonnebloem in Cape Town, Windmill Park in Boksburg, Country View in Midrand, and the Warwick Triangle in Durban. The relevant official proclamations were gazetted in March and April 1990.

The period from October 1988 to November 1989 was an eventful period for South Africa, playing out not only in Boksburg and in most of South Africa, but also internationally. By 1987 international pressures were mounting on South Africa to change course. I arrived at the University of Denison, in Granville, Ohio in July 1987 for an orientation programme before I commenced with my postgraduate studies in Economics at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana. This was a period when the international divesting campaign was at its height. Soon after my return to South Africa in October 1988 the consumer boycott in Boksburg commenced. This boycott was to last close to a year and was called off on 17 November 1989. A few days earlier, on 9 November, the Berlin Wall fell. This was an event that had ripple effects throughout the world and undoubtedly impacted political developments in South Africa over the next few years. I am sure that the confluence of events during 1989, including those in Boksburg and Berlin, must have had an impact on State President FW de Klerk and contributed to his ground-breaking announcements, which included the unconditional release of Mr Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of all political organisations on 2 February 1990.

The press coverage of the Boksburg consumer boycott was extensive. An interview with Henry Jeffreys, a member of the Save Boksburg Committee, in a scene where one of the buses was ferrying residents of Reiger Park to neighbouring towns to do their shopping, was recorded by ITV News in December 1988.[14]

A booklet on the protest action, *The Boksburg Boycott* by Harry Mashabela and Monty Narsoo, covers the period between December 1988 and March 1989.[15] It is based on interviews with 'key actors', but given its timing underestimated the resolve of the protesters.[16] The authors observed that by "March (1989) the protest had weakened in Vosloorus but continued unchanged in Reiger Park."[17] They noted that the Save Boksburg Committee had "managed to maintain unity between potentially conflicting interest groups and sustained the protest".[18] However, they seem to have had doubts whether the consumer boycott would endure for much longer. "The alliance of interest groups (in Reiger Park) which has sustained the protest is fragile and the stresses and strains of a prolonged boycott may place the alliance under irresistible pressure, leading to fragmentation".[19] A hallmark of the consumer boycott in Boksburg was its non-violent nature. According to Mashabela and Narsoo: "One issue on which the various groups in the township (Reiger Park) agreed is that the protest should be non-violent, disciplined, united and legal."[20] And later on: "In both townships (Reiger Park and Vosloorus) the protest remained non-violent and disciplined: this ensured that the (Nationalist) government, which was obviously reaping political benefits from events in the town, was not under pressure to act against protest leaders."[21] It is safe to say that this discipline was largely attributable to strong leadership under the guidance of Mahomed Navsa.

The Save Boksburg Committee remained active until late 1992. During the period of its existence,

following the consumer boycott, it initiated and participated in various community-based activities. I recall that it called a 'mock' election in Reiger Park, which was probably in response to the election of new members to the Reiger Park Management Committee, to fill the vacancies left by the five members who resigned, that was scheduled for 16 May 1990.

A research paper on the consumer boycott in Boksburg quoted from various newspapers: "The boycott lasted for over a year, during which time some 13 large shops in the town closed down."[22] Large retailers such as Edgars' Clothing Store lost millions of rands. The local store manager of Edgars claimed at the time that while the store picked up on white trade, it was certainly not enough to compensate for the loss of black trade. A survey of commerce and industry conducted by the Boksburg Alliance (a group of businessmen opposed to segregated facilities) was released in February 1989. The survey showed that on average businesses had lost 59% of their customers since the boycott started.

In April 1989 Retail International, a property development company, announced that it had shelved a "multimillion-rand project" to build a shopping complex in Boksburg. The managing director of the company, Mr Joe Bentel, said, "The project will proceed only when the petty apartheid policy being applied in Boksburg is discontinued. Our decision is in line with the decision taken by Woolworths and Edgars, who will be major tenants in the development. As long as the political situation in Boksburg remains unchanged, our development is dead."

Some of the actions taken against the Boksburg Town Council during 1989 to protest against its reimposition of segregated facilities included:

- The Save Boksburg Committee arranged buses to run daily from Boksburg to Benoni.
- In March 1989 nearly 2 000 Reiger Park residents decided to continue the consumer boycott of Boksburg.
- A march by 3 000 residents of Reiger Park in September 1989, in protest against the policies of the council, followed by the submission of a memorandum to the council, called for one non-racial municipal authority for Boksburg.
- An application in the Transvaal Provincial Division of the Supreme Court in Pretoria in September 1989 by the chairman of the Reiger Park Management Committee, Mr Butch Jantjes, to have the council's reimposition of petty apartheid declared null and void. The application followed the successful outcome of a similar application to reverse the Carletonville (West Rand) Town Council's resegregation of municipal facilities.
- A threat by the Dairy Board in September 1989 to withdraw its subsidy of a Dairy Week at Bokkie Park in Boksburg if it was not opened to all races. (The park was a model dairy farm and menagerie for school children.) The council subsequently agreed to open the park to all races, as "white school children should not be deprived of the annual event".
- A picnic in October 1989 at Boksburg Lake, attended by 200 residents of Reiger Park and Vosloorus as well as members of the Black Sash and the Democratic Party, to protest against the segregation of the lake area.
- In November 1989 the organisation behind the boycott of Boksburg, the Save Boksburg Committee (SBC), ended the boycott following an announcement by the state president that the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 would be scrapped as soon as possible. A member of the SBC, Mr Henry Jeffries, said, "The government's intention is seen by local residents as a major breakthrough and achievement, so a year of commitment to the boycott was ended."[23]

The international media covered the 1988-1989 Boksburg consumer boycott and its aftermath as well. Some of the coverage is summarised below.

The *Los Angeles Times* on the boycott:

In a matter of days, sidewalks once clogged with shoppers have become nearly empty. Just as the Christmas shopping season began in earnest, blacks and coloreds took themselves and their pocketbooks to other stores in nearby towns, often riding buses paid for by whites who oppose the Conservative Party. 'Our dignity has been trampled upon,' explained Buchanan Jantjes, from Reiger Park. 'We are just granting them (whites) their Christmas wish. Now they'll have a 'white' Christmas.'"

A large clothing chain withdrew from negotiations to build a new Boksburg store, and major department stores said they would never consider opening new branches here. An annual Christmas program that draws thousands of people to Boksburg Lake to hear black and white children sing carols by candlelight was cancelled by the organizers in protest.

"Boksburg has retrogressed 30 years in the past two months," said car dealer Bob Delport, shaking his head and chain-smoking. Gasoline purchases at Delport Motors have fallen 21%. Delport, like dozens of other business people, has pleaded with the new mayor, Beyers de Klerk, to change his mind. "But the guy's got blinkers on," Delport complained. "You can't talk to him."

Phillip Samson, a 25-year-old clerk in Boksburg, started doing his shopping elsewhere, even though he knows it might one day cost him his own job. "Wherever you go into Boksburg, you feel you're not wanted," Samson said. "It makes us feel horrible. I don't feel safe here anymore."

At Bob Bieber's store, Champion Outfitters, which caters primarily to blacks, sales are down more than 90% and the few customers who come in "are up-tight with us", Bieber said.

"I'm embarrassed out of my mind for Boksburg," said George Green, whose furniture store has seen sales plummet by 55%. Some of his black customers have called and asked him to send a truck to collect their instalment payments because they don't want to be seen in his store. "I feel like I want to cry," Green said.[24]

The start of the consumer boycott

On 10 November 1988 the *Washington Post* reported: "'Whites only' signs were starting to appear in public parks where the Conservatives ousted National Party local governments in the 26 October 1988 white municipal elections. The Conservative Party won 65 of the Transvaal's 105 white municipalities."

A few weeks later the *Orlando Sentinel* and the *Chicago Tribune* reported: "Boksburg became the focus of 'a nationwide furore' at the end of November 1988 when the Town Clerk, Johann Coetzee, reported that the Conservative Party majority on the town council voted to bar 'non-whites' from a large lakeside park in the centre of town, along with the municipal swimming pool, tennis courts and town hall."[25] In response "Black and Coloured (mixed-race) residents of the area announced at a rally on Wednesday (30th November 1988) that they would shop elsewhere and would close bank and credit accounts in Boksburg to protest the park's resegregation. The boycott took effect Thursday (1 December 1988)."[26]

The *Chicago Tribune* quoted several politicians and residents, among them "Sidwell Mofokeng, a black politician from Vosloorus [who] said, 'The politics of hatred … is making my people more conscious of the real power they can wield, which is their economic muscle.'"[27] The jogger Lionel Landsberg (17) who was jogging in Reiger Park had given up "his usual workout route – around Boksburg Lake – since the park was ordered segregated. 'We decided to keep Boksburg white by taking our business elsewhere,' he said. 'We are not going to stop,' he added 'but I think the Conservative Party is going to give in.'"[28]

The Christian Science Monitor reported that businesses are going belly up. And the whole world, it seems, is closing in to condemn the place. Some multinational companies are

threatening to move to neighbouring Benoni and Germiston (where business is booming because of the Boksburg boycott). A group of businessmen and other concerned citizens have formed the Boksburg Alliance to pressure the town council into reversing its actions.[29]

David Crary wrote for the Associated Press News:

Johan Viljoen, chairman of the Boksburg Chamber of Commerce, estimated that shop-owners lost more than $420 000 (R1.26 million) during the four weeks since the start of the boycott. Sales at some clothing and furniture stores were down as much as 80 percent, he said.

On December 22, 1988, developers of a $11 million (R33 million) shopping mall planned for Boksburg announced the project was shelved because of the city's bad business climate. The major tenant would have been the OK Bazaar retail company. Its chief executive, Gordon Hood, said business at his company's existing store in Boksburg had declined by 49 percent in the four-week period.

A week ago, developers of another proposed shopping mall for Boksburg announced that their plans were being shelved until conditions in the town "return to normal".

The Conservatives have accused the government of hypocrisy and challenged President PW Botha's National Party to repeal the Separate Amenities Act, which allows local officials to segregate public amenities.[30]

Several multinational companies whose business and products were directly impacted, like Colgate-Palmolive, American Cyanamid and Unilever, "provided buses to ferry shoppers to stores in neighbouring towns, cancelled expansion plans and ran advertisements denouncing the racist council."[31]

The end of the consumer boycott

Almost a year after the consumer boycott started the *Deseret News* in Utah, USA reported :

Hundreds of jubilant mixed-race people ended a year-old boycott of white-owned stores Saturday (November 18, 1989), declaring victory after the government said it would scrap the segregation law they were protesting.

Nearly 1,000 residents of Reiger Park, a mixed-race section of Boksburg, crowded into taxis, cars and seven banner-draped buses for a motorcade through the main business district. Grateful white merchants greeted them with welcome signs and free champagne. "This is our victory day," said Danny Cassel, an organizer of the boycott. "We have shown that we cannot be taken for granted."

On Thursday (November 16, 1989), President FW de Klerk announced the act would be repealed as soon as possible after Parliament reconvenes in February 1990. In response, the Save Boksburg Committee decided Friday night (17 November 1989) to call off the boycott.

De Klerk also declared that all whites-only beaches should be opened to all races. Johannes Oosthuisen, the Conservative mayor of the southern town of Mossel Bay, said Saturday he would fight to maintain segregation at the town beach and that a "spirit of rebellion" is rising among whites opposed to integration.

During the boycott the City Council had refused to back down despite pressure from shop-owners. Reiger Park residents generally observed the boycott throughout the year, but some blacks from the nearby township of Vosloorus had begun returning to Boksburg stores.[32]

In *The New York Times*, Christopher S Wren wrote:

The South African Government today proclaimed the immediate integration of the business district in Boksburg, a Transvaal town where the far-right

Members of the right-wing Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging and the Boksburg municipal police attack residents of Reiger Park while they were staging a 'protest picnic' at the white declared Boksburg lake. (© Graeme Williams, 1989).

Conservatives restored whites-only signs and other trappings of so-called petty apartheid last year.

The move comes one week after President FW de Klerk promised to repeal the Separate Amenities Act. The consumer boycott was only lifted last weekend after Mr De Klerk's promise to end the segregation of public places across South Africa. The Government turned a blind eye to the boycott, which is technically illegal under the national state of emergency.

When black shoppers returned last weekend, white store owners put up welcome signs, and some served champagne to their first customers.

Hernus Kriel, the Minister of Planning and Provincial Affairs, said that in declaring downtown Boksburg a free trading area, the Government was responding to requests from business and industry as well as local members of Parliament and other interest groups.

"The Government sincerely hopes that the negative image attributed to Boksburg, both locally and abroad – an image for which the businessmen and community unjustly paid a high price – is now something of the past," he said, reading a statement.[33]

Boksburg, a few years later, at the dawn of the new South Africa

In September 1993 Bill Keller of the *The New York Times* visited Boksburg and wrote:

It is hard to imagine that the CP [Conservative Party] majority elected in October 1988 to run Boksburg was still running it three years into the era of FW de Klerk's reforms.

There are moderates on the Council. But they are barely audible in the company of Beyers de Klerk, a real-estate agent and auctioneer who carries a pistol at his side and a Bible in his briefcase. Councilman Koos van der Merwe is a bald prankster. The women, Gloria Bosch and Stephanie Greyling on the Council's right wing, are less flamboyant but just as reactionary.

At the first Council meeting after the assassination of Boksburg's most famous black resident, Chris Hani, in his driveway on April 10, 1993, Koos van der Merwe rose and suggested a minute of silence in honor of the slain black leader. Beyers de Klerk permitted black leaders to hold a memorial rally in the Old Town Hall. "We looked at it from a business point of view," Councilman de Klerk explains. "If we hadn't said yes, there would have been chaos. If we had not given them the civic center, they would have pulled the place apart."

In Boksburg, many people regard Beyers de Klerk as a one-man embodiment of the white dilemma. He is a separatist by conviction, but as a businessman he knows the price of isolation and so he has acquiesced in the onslaught of democracy – up to a point. Recently, moderates have begun to hold up Beyers as an example of a man who has come to his senses, a born-again realist. Right-wingers like Gloria Bosch huff that he is a traitor, a man who has sold out his country for the sake of his real-estate franchise.

"It's not a question of living together," he says. "Each white in this country has been living with a black in his backyard since day one -- his servants. I have no problem eating with blacks, living with blacks. Why? Because we rule. But it changes when you don't rule."

In reality, Boksburg was, and still is, something of a Middletown [an average town], an ordinary place that had somehow elected its anxious id to the City Council. Egged on by the Conservative Party's national leaders, who were thrilled by their victory, the new Boksburg majority set out to make their city the Alamo[34] of apartheid.

By February 1990, when FW de Klerk announced plans to repeal all the remaining apartheid statutes, Boksburg had all but surrendered. Later, Beyers de Klerk quit the Conservative Party caucus and declared himself an independent. After the Hani killing he joined FW de Klerk's National Party. It was not inconceivable to him that he might someday take the final step and join the African National Congress.

"My heart tells me one thing," he says, "but my educated brain tells me you cannot have what your heart wants." "At the end of the day, I had to stop being a Boere-Boere Mayor and I came back to being a businessman," he says. "It's all rands and cents. We've changed here because we were forced to change." When Beyers de Klerk broke with the Conservative Party, Hani sent him a fax congratulating him on his good sense. [Tokyo] Sexwale called the councilman on the phone and listened with amusement as De Klerk pitched one of his favorite pipe dreams, bringing the Olympics to Boksburg.

"Beyers is trying to be something, but he's held by the past," Sexwale says. "He epitomizes the confusion within the Afrikaner community as we see it today: the fear of the future, the guilt for the past, the stubbornness."

In the weeks after Hani was killed, I found only one person

who suggested that Boksburg was in some way to blame for the black leader's death: Alfred Woodington, the chairman of the Boksburg ANC, who said the town was so friendly it caused Hani to let down his guard.

On a nippy evening in June, Camille Burger called together the members of the city Planning Committee in the upstairs chamber of the Old Town Hall. The theme of his hour-long presentation was "Quo vadis?" ("Where are you going?"), a Latin phrase much in vogue these days in South Africa.

Burger, a conservative but a realist, readily concedes the absurdity of the "artificial land use pattern" apartheid wrought upon his map. To the south, for example, are the low-income satellite communities of Windmill Park and Villa Liza, which Boksburg conceived and built in the closing years of the old order. Windmill Park was among the first communities in South Africa to be exempted from racial restrictions, though it was built mainly for "coloreds," people of mixed race. Villa Liza was designed for Indians. Both are tracts of doormat-size lots topped with shabby, look-alike boxes, isolated in the weedy prairie – far enough from town that transportation costs were sure to eat up the advantages of a cheap mortgage.

But in their thinking about the future of Boksburg, Woodington and Burger are not all that far apart. At first blush, Woodington says the idea of creating jobs in the south made sense to him. And, somewhat to my surprise, he predicts that in the end most people will remain in neighborhoods with their own people. He describes friends who had moved into white areas, only to find they missed the townships.

Tokyo Sexwale, whose job in the ANC consists partly of reassuring whites, says he is sympathetic to white fears, within limits. "Naturally, the mosaic is going to change," he says. "The tempo is going to change. The allocation of resources is going to change. Boksburg will be subject to the dictates of a new Constitution. Yes, there's going to be some pain. We will try to ease this new Constitution in, to get people to understand the new ball game. Of course, if what you're getting is not genuine misunderstanding but open revolt, you may have to ram it down their throats."[35]

Table 7.1 Survey of housing needs in Reiger Park in (1990).

Sub-area	Number of premises/ formal dwellings	Estimated number of individuals per premises	Estimated number of people
Galeview	682	9.60	6 547
Doubles & Hier en Daar	292	13.20	3 854
Jerusalem	160	10.34	1 654
Alphaville	46	9.41	433
Opmekaar	52	5.50	286
Fast Move	160	6.77	1 083
Old Reiger Park	240	9.66	2 318
MM & Little Germiston	212	6.90	1 463
New Reiger Park / Maseru	120	5.07	608
Excuse Me	172	5.30	912
Flats	404	5.92	2 392
Delmore – numbers assumed	304	5.07	1 541
TOTAL	2 844		23 092

Simon Zadek, Sanjiv Lingayah and Sara Murphy in a United Nations Development report, *Consumer Works!* in 1998 state: "Nowhere was the strategy of consumer boycotts more effective than in the city of Boksburg. This case of action by the residents of Reiger Park and Vosloorus, Boksburg, illustrates that consumer power was effective in challenging local and national political issues. (Even) White owned businesses began to mobilize white opinion against the council and pressed the National Government to intervene."[36]

The continuous housing crisis in Reiger Park

One of the perpetual challenges experienced by many residents of Reiger Park was the lack of affordable housing, especially for the most vulnerable in our community. The rigid implementation of the Group Areas Act meant that people of colour had very limited options about where they could reside. Following the forced removals in the 1960s and 1970s, the land made available for people of colour for housing – often far from places of work – was severely restricted. This soon resulted in overcrowding and by the mid-1980s many Black and Coloured townships (locations) had witnessed an explosion in the number of backyard dwellings, a not-so-hidden form of informal settlements.

The Town Council of Boksburg once again acknowledged the housing crisis in Reiger Park after it commissioned a survey in the area during 1989. It is quite interesting, if not ironic, that this survey was done during the consumer boycott of Boksburg Town. Attached to the minutes of the meeting of the Town Council of Boksburg on Friday, 30 March 1990 was a report of this survey.[37] The purpose of the survey was to determine: (i) The housing needs in Reiger Park, (ii) the social circumstances in the area; (iii) other circumstances related to housing; and (iv) an estimate of the size of the population of the area.

The survey was done by means of a questionnaire and the entire Reiger Park was covered. Delmore and Delmore Park were not surveyed. A total of 1 472 residential premises out of 2 136, and 166 of the 404 flats were visited. The survey revealed an average of 1.23 unauthorised backyard structures per dwelling in Galeview and only about 0.3 unauthorised backyard structures per dwelling in 'new' Reiger Park ('Maseru'). The total number of unauthorised backyard structures in the whole of Reiger Park was estimated at 1 800. This amounted to 0.84 unauthorised backyard structures per official/authorised dwelling, excluding the 404 flats.

There were an estimated 9.26 persons per residential premises (including both formal and unauthorised structures on the premises) in Reiger Park. This figure was 13.2 for the Doubles, 10.34 for Jerusalem, 9.6 for Galeview, 9.66 for 'old' Reiger Park, and 5 for 'new' Reiger Park.

The total population was estimated at 23 092 and by sub-area as follows:

Alphaville was a temporary area constructed to house people that were evicted from the Singles. All these families were later accommodated in Popcorn Valley (Reiger Park II). On the land previously referred to as the Singles, the area Excuse Me was built in 1987-88.

With regard to the socio-economic conditions the report refers to an unemployment rate of 22% and 128 teenage pregnancies during 1989. There were an estimated 3 600 children between 0 and 6 years old, but only four crèches or preschool centres that could accommodate 244 children. Thus, although many of the elderly (and stay-at-home moms) attended to young children, there clearly was a need for additional facilities to care for the young.

At the time of the survey 320 residential units were under construction in Reiger Park II, and 334 erven planned for Delmore Park II. Also in the pipeline were 614 erven in Du Preezville. (It is unclear if this development ever materialised.) In addition to structural factors, the reasonably central location of Reiger Park and access to the passenger rail network were mentioned as possible reasons for

housing in Reiger Park being in high demand. The report acknowledged that despite the new housing developments that were either under construction or in the pipeline at the time of the survey, "the problem of unauthorised backyard structures and the housing need in Reiger Park is unlikely to be solved soon". This appears to be the main reason why the Town Council decided to recommend a site and service development located at the current Ramaphosaville township.[38] The Head of Health Services, a member of the Town Council and the Town Engineer visited Khayelitsha in Cape Town in September 1989 to observe how a site and service site had developed and were satisfied that the structures erected were of a 'high quality'.

Following the 1994 elections the new government initiated a free (known as RDP) housing subsidy programme in an attempt to address the pent-up demand for housing by low-income households. Twenty-six years later, in December 2020, the spokesperson of the Department of Human Settlements, McIntosh Polela, is reported to have said that the department will no longer support new free housing projects except for the elderly people, military veterans, people living with disabilities and child-headed households.[39] At the time the total housing backlog across the country was estimated at 2.6 million units. The Minister of Human Settlements, Lindiwe Sisulu, was of the view that the policy of RDP housing has had unintended consequences, with many of these houses being sold or rented out by the new owners, and that it created 'a culture of entitlement'.[40] The (free) housing subsidy programme had become financially unsustainable, although government would continue to support medium- and high-density developments. Polela said there would now be a shift in focus and that one of the "innovative ways of ensuring that people have decent shelter over their head was upscaling the provision of serviced sites to enable people to build houses for themselves."

Informal settlements in Reiger Park and the xenophobic violence during 2008

Increased rural-urban migration, especially after 1994, natural population growth and an increase in the number of undocumented migrants into South Africa have all contributed to an increase in the number of informal settlements across the country, especially in urban and peri-urban areas. The mushrooming of these informal settlements is also in part the result of administrative confusion, institutional restructuring, and the absence of a coherent policy with regard to affordable housing and urban planning. The splitting of households into smaller entities also appears to be a contributing factor.[41]

Noah K Marutlulle notes that the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality (EMM) is one of the fastest growing areas in South Africa. The EMM was formed following the restructuring of local government in 2000 and is made up of nine towns: Germiston, Alberton, Benoni, Boksburg, Brakpan, Kempton Park/Tembisa, Edenvale, Nigel and Springs. Ekurhuleni is a highly concentrated urban complex and home to the largest number of informal settlements in Gauteng. "Of the 122 informal settlements in the area only 20% are upgradable and 80%, which accommodates more than 400 000 of its residents has, by 2017, not been targeted for redevelopment, mainly due to inadequate resources." Marutlulle quotes Lindsell who argued in *Black Business Quarterly* in 2007: "For hundreds of thousands of people in Ekurhuleni a place to call home remains an elusive dream."[42]

At its meeting on 30 March 1990 the Town Council of Boksburg turned down a proposal for a new Coloured area, portion 19 of the farm Vlakplaats No. 138, located next to Dawn Park. Instead it proposed that[43]

> 'n gedeelte van die Restant van Driefontein 85 I.R. asook 'n gedeelte van die plaas Klippoortjie 112 I.R. geleë suid van die Elsburg dam en wes van die Elsburg pad voorgestel word vir die daarstelling

van 'n beheerde selfbou skema ingevolge artikel 6A van die Wet op Onregmatige plakkery (Wet 52 van 1951) soos gewysig vir die vestiging van bewoners van ongemagtigde woonstrukture in die Reigerpark Kleurling woongebied en dat die nodige onderhandelings met die eienaars en die Huis van Verteenwoordigers aangeknoop word vir die doel.[44]

This is the location of the current Ramaphosaville township, an extension of Reiger Park. Thus, following the Council's decision on 30 March 1990 Ramaphosaville, today an extension of Reiger Park, was established or rather 'emerged' during the early 1990s, shortly before the first democratic elections in South Africa. The area started as an informal settlement with some of its residents coming from Reiger Park (most of them former backyard dwellers), others from townships like Daveyton on the East Rand and some from further afield – the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. A few residents originate from neighbouring countries, e.g. Lesotho, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi.[45]

Ramaphosaville township/settlement was initially occupied by people who built their own shacks (the 'self-help scheme' as referred to in the Council's decision). For some time there were no basic services such as water, sanitation and refuse removal in the area. It took a few years for these services to be provided by the local authorities and over time the area attracted thousands of people.[46]

Another much more crowded informal settlement in Reiger Park, but smaller in size, is the Joe Slovo settlement. It is located at the back of the Sports Field and squeezed in between the back of Goede Hoop Primary School and remnants of the old mine hostel (Kampong). This area was previously used as extra rugby fields.

The xenophobic violence in South Africa during 2008 flared up in Ramaphosaville, Reiger Park, in May and affected particularly the section that is called Road Reserve (the informal part) and part of the RDP section (eGoli), established around 2004. Nobayethi Dube spent about 17 days, spread across 14 weeks, in Ramaphosaville researching the causes and aftermath of the xenophobic violence. About twelve people were killed in Ramaphosaville township; six South Africans and six foreign nationals. Media coverage of Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave (35), a Mozambican national who was burned, and later died, made headlines.[47]

The trouble started on 15 and 16 May 2008 (a Thursday and Friday). A fight broke among a group of gang members and they turned against one of their own. A man was chased by a group of about thirty men through the dusty streets of Ramaphosaville. The group of thirty were Shangaans from Mozambique (chanting Viva Frelimo slogans) and the man, who later died, a South African Zulu man.[48]

One interviewee lamented the way foreigners have been allowed into the country, mentioning that in other African countries like Zimbabwe you would 'not just enter'. Other respondents raised similar sentiments around lack of control of foreign nationals entering the country.

Churches, community-based organisations and ordinary citizens, particularly from Reiger Park, provided assistance, with the churches from Reiger Park taking the lead in terms of organising. On Saturday 17 May 2008 church leaders became aware that several displaced foreign nationals had taken refuge at the Reiger Park police station. On Sunday morning (18 May) most church leaders appealed to their congregants to open their hearts and give donations. The Anglican Church, situated a few meters from the police station, became a safe haven that night for most of the foreigners seeking refuge.

More foreigners started coming from other surrounding areas, such as the Joe Slovo informal settlement and the Angelo informal settlement. The church leaders formed a task team whose members included some community organisations and schools in Reiger Park. The task team was

divided into (i) Co-ordinators; (ii) Feeding scheme; (iii) Feeding points; (iv) Security; (v) Health; (vi) Logistics, and (vii) Communications. The weekend was mostly used for organising and providing food to those who were displaced. Community members from Reiger Park volunteered; some cooked while others brought blankets and clothes for the displaced.

On the Monday morning (19 May) the nearby civic centre in Reiger Park was made available and a number of those displaced were moved to the civic centre. Businesses in Boksburg were approached for food and other supplies. Support was also received from the Catholic Diocese of Johannesburg, and International organisations such as Oxfam and Dorcas Aid. The supplies were kept at St Anthony's Centre and there was strict management.[49] By Tuesday, 20 May, word had spread that Reiger Park was aiding foreigners and the number of those displaced rose to approximately 6 000 people.[50]

IRIN News (now *The New Humanitarian*) reported on 21 May 2008 that at least 23 people died in the xenophobic violence that had erupted in Gauteng and about 13 000 people were displaced. It quotes a certain Mr Mano Fernado from Mozambique who stayed with his brother in the Ramaphosaville informal settlement. During the violence he fled to Reiger Park where he took refuge in one of the churches and subsequently decided to take one of the buses that was made available to transport them back to Mozambique. The paper also quoted Winnie Bosman of Reiger Park's Community Crisis Centre, who said that donations from sympathetic South Africans had flooded in, while "some just drove here and gave us food". She said they were feeding about 5 000 people who had fled violence in the area.[51]

For two weeks the churches and the community of Reiger Park took charge by providing food and shelter and addressing the foreigners' other needs. In Ramaphosaville an organisation called Khayelitsha Home Base Care took it upon itself to go and knock on doors to find out if any people needed assistance. Some respondents from Ramaphosaville questioned the way 'help' was offered. They felt they were left on their own while the community of Reiger Park took in foreign nationals.

Residents of Ramaphosaville were highly critical of the manner in which the media reported on events in the area in May 2008. Respondents felt that the real issues were not covered. There was also a feeling that the reporting was biased in that it highlighted the plight of foreigners while South Africans had been demonised. The churches in Reiger Park also criticised the media. A statement was drafted by the task team and sent to the press to highlight the assistance that they had been offering to the community of Ramaphosaville and other surrounding areas, and not only to the foreigners who sought shelter at churches in Reiger Park, but the statement received no coverage in the newspapers.[52]

A more recent flare-up

Besides the incidents above there have been many other protest actions and flare-ups in Reiger Park over the years. One such recent incident happened on 26 November 2018. According to David Forster and Jonathan Schoeman of the Reiger Park Community Forum the reasons for the protest actions were the community's unhappiness with the people that were supposed to represent the area at local and national government levels and to highlight the plight and needs of the community that could no longer be ignored. They said that the residents felt marginalised and demanded that service delivery issues and development projects in the area be addressed and resolved. Some of the many challenges confronting the community were electricity cable theft, drugs, a general lack of service delivery, and no new developments in the area. Schoeman said: "We have been marginalised for far too long, and it's about time government comes to the party."[53]

8

What is in a name? Being Coloured in South Africa

Individuals have far more in common than the physical (and other) differences between them. As humans we are social beings and relationships are therefore important to us. These relationships can either be emotional (personal) or transactional. We all long for acceptance, belonging and respect for our dignity and self-worth. Where some of these emotional expressions are in short supply or absent, we tend to build self-defence mechanisms which often take the form of fight or flight, our general reactions to what we perceive as real and/or imaginary dangers.

Relationships find expression first and foremost between individuals but can also be expressed in a group context. Individuals are often grouped inter alia in terms of their gender, citizenship (nation state), language, religion, ethnicity/tribe, or colour (in practice often a proxy for 'race'), or any combination of these. The denial of one's dignity or any form of discrimination against you as an individual or as part of a group (however that group is defined) would obviously generate a counter-reaction.

To provide for our basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter we have to work. Economic interests as transactional relationships find expression in our work life, either as self-employed, employers or employees. Our desire to improve our own standard of living leads to our quest to acquire and accumulate resources and where such resources are limited (which often appears to be the case) we act out of self-interest and sometimes at the expense of others. It is this self-interest of individuals that often leads to conflict, divisions, power struggles, discrimination, the denial of the rights and dignity of others and sometimes violence. At the same time, the pursuit of our self-interest and self-worth can also be beneficial to society at large if it leads to the provision of goods and services that others might require, provided it is pursued in a manner that fully recognises our interdependence, individual rights, dignity, and freedoms (some of the key principles of market-based and social-democratic economic systems).

The history of South Africa (and the world) is unfortunately riddled with the quest for resources

by individuals or groups at the expense of others. It is in this context that the colonisation of South Africa, the subsequent fight for its natural resources, and the categorisation in terms of population groups to divide and rule and to secure resources for some, often at the expense of others, have led to much conflict and prejudice.

Although Europeans have fought many bitter wars against each other, both on European soil (e.g., the two World Wars) and elsewhere (e.g., the Anglo-Boer Wars), and were involved in many dubious practices during the colonial periods and the era of slavery, people of European descent and the values they espouse have historically generally been viewed as 'civilised' (or 'better'). Over time being European has been equated to being White and 'western'; and the people of African, Middle Eastern, Asian, and South American descent referred to as 'people of colour' by various names (Black, Brown, Coloured, Indigenous, Indian, non-white, etc.). This labelling or categorisation of people took on an additional dimension in South Africa and the USA, with institutional segregation taking place in both countries. The recent Black Lives Matter movement emanating from the USA and spreading across the world suggests that a person's colour still has an important influence on many of our social, political and economic relationships. In the USA today the phrase 'people of colour' usually refers to all people of African, Latino/Hispanic, Native American, Asian or Pacific Island descent, and its intent is to be inclusive.[1] Kee Malesky quotes Prof Salvador Vidal-Ortiz, who in *Encyclopedia of Race, Ethnicity and Society, argues*: "People of color is, however it is viewed, a political term, but it is also a term that allows for a more complex set of identity for the individual — a relational one that is in constant flux."

The phrase 'people of colour' is used in this publication in a similar context in the case of South Africa. During the late 1960s to 1980s the term 'Black' was generally used by political activists and academics to refer to all 'people of colour' in South Africa. This was primarily the result of the impact of the Black Consciousness Movement, led by Steve Biko, and as an alternative to the negative term 'non-white'. Although the term 'Black' is still used in South Africa in this context, primarily by intellectuals and some politicians (although often with qualifications, such as Black-African, etc.) it would appear that the term 'Black' in the new South Africa, at least in the minds of most citizens, has reverted to its narrower interpretation; hence the use of the term 'people of colour' in this publication. Trying to arrive at appropriate (or politically correct) terminologies to refer to the various race groups (other than White people) in South Africa can be a minefield. I was indeed surprised by the terminology used by the ANC intellectual and strategist Oscar van Heerden when he referred to "*other black minorities*, such as coloureds and Indians" in his book, *Two Minutes to Midnight, Will Ramaphosa's ANC Survive?*[2] Eugene Baron and Nico Botha quote Dr Allan Boesak as having said, sarcastically I presume, a number of years after the 1994 democratic elections, "before 1994, he knew who he was, but the ANC has turned him into a Coloured once again."[3]

The term 'Coloured' emerged in South Africa in the early 1800s and was used to refer to people from Khoi and San descent, descendants from slaves at the Cape, and people from various 'mixed-relationships'. It was in the decades after the freeing of both the local Khoisan in 1828 from colonial restrictions on their labour mobility, and of imported slaves in 1834-38 (with British empire-wide emancipation) that a heterogeneous group of people, referred to as Coloureds, emerged.[4]

Prof Richard van der Ross argues in 1979: "Language is not static, and when I speak of the Coloured people, I do not refer to a static unchangeable concept. I seek to use a term which most people will understand, when used in a certain context, i.e., the context of the population groups of South Africa."[5]

Thirty-five years later in 2014 Malesky observes: "Language is and always will be an essential element in the struggle for understanding among peoples. Changes in the words and phrases we use to describe each other reflect whatever progress we make on the path toward a world where everyone feels respected and included."[6]

Van der Ross further notes: "Over the years, people have spoken of Hotnots, Free Blacks, Cape Boys, Capeys, Basters, Bruinmense, Coloureds, Eurafricans, Blacks, and Brown South Africans. All these terms were acceptable terms at one time or another. It is my belief that 'Coloured people' is the least objectionable and least likely to lead to confusion, therefore I use it."[7] He vehemently rejects the use of 'so-called Coloured' and in this regard I am in full agreement with him.

On the issue of terminology/labels Van der Ross concludes: "Possibly future generations of Coloured people may learn to shed the rancour [bitterness or resentfulness] which now attaches to the label 'Coloured'. If so, this will only take place in a social, political, and economic milieu in which all can live with freedom and dignity."[8]

According to Malesky the term 'Colored' was adopted in the United States by emancipated slaves after the end of the American Civil War. However, it was replaced in the late 1960s onwards by 'Black' and later 'African-American', although it is retained in the name of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In Britain it was the accepted term for Black, Asian, or mixed-race people until the 1960s. Malesky notes that the use of the phrase 'colored people' peaked in books published in the United States of America in 1970.

In South Africa Van der Ross observed: "By the 1970s [there was] a swing away from the general acceptance of the term Coloured people."[9] Gradually over the past twenty-six years, since the first democratic elections in April 1994, many people in the Coloured community have again embraced the term 'Coloured', although among political activists and academics the term 'Black' (with the qualification to also refer to Black-Africans as distinct from 'other' Black groups) is still preferred. In Afrikaans, the term 'Bruin mense' or 'Bruinmense', instead of 'Kleurlinge', is preferred by some among the middle class. A small but vocal group of people referred to as Coloured are reclaiming their origins and prefer to be referred to as Khoisan or Griqua.

The official statistics by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) records that the South African population increased from 40,58 million in 1996 to an estimated 59,62 million by mid-2020. Official statistics prior to 1994 states that the South African population increased from 5,18 million in 1904 to 21,40 million in 1970 (see Table 8.1).

These official statistics also break down the total population by population/racial groups. Between 1950 and 1994 the Population Registration Act (No. 30 of 1950, 7 July 1950) classified the South African population by race, and this was the basis on which the population was counted: by racial group. The Population Registration Act of 1950 was repealed 41 years later, on 17 June 1991. Prior to 1950 there were presumably other laws or informal procedures to categorise people by race/population group. Post 1994 the classification by racial/population group is 'required' on most official and some unofficial forms, although there is no legislation that defines who belongs to what racial group other than a broad reference in some laws to previously disadvantaged individuals (and in some instances 'designated' groups). The recording by population/racial group, post 1994, is therefore presumably done on a 'voluntary' basis and where the individual concerned does not tick the 'appropriate' box, the officials in charge mostly do so, probably based on appearance (and/or surname). It is of interest that in the 2011 census roughly 0,5% of the population tick the box 'other', but this category was ignored by Stats SA in the mid-year population estimates for 2020.

The population numbers between 1921 and 1951, for five of the towns on the East Rand, were

Table 8.1 South Africa population – numbers

	1904[a]	1946	1970	1996[b]	2011	2020
Black	3 491 000	7 831 000	15 036 000	31 399 533	41 014 800	48 153 727
Coloured	445 000	928 000	2 021 000	3 682 892	4 629 084	5 247 740
Asian	122 000	285 000	618 000	1 052 791	1 284 709	1 541 113
White	1 117 000	2 372 000	3 727 000	4 448 356	4 588 256	4 679 770
Other					253 712	
Total	5 175 000	11 416 000	21 402 000	40 583 572	51 770 561	59 622 350

[a] Source of data from 1904 to 1970.[10]

[b] Source of data from 1996 to 2020:[11]

Table 8.2 South Africa population – percentage

	1904	1946	1970	1996	2011	2020
Black	67,5	68,6	70,3	77,4	79,2	80,8
Coloured	8,6	8,1	9,4	9,1	8,9	8,8
Asian	2,4	2,5	2,9	2,6	2,5	2,6
White	21,6	20,8	17,4	11,0	8,9	7,8
Other					0,5	
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0

Based on totals in Table 8.1.

Table 8.3 East Rand population by town – numbers

	1921	1936	1946	1951
Benoni	47 731	77 760	85 290	109 485
Boksburg	37 979	50 126	56 631	64 316
Brakpan	24 664	54 811	83 456	85 102
Springs	19 400	86 874	111 141	119 382
Germiston	42 355	68 142	148 646	178 757
Total	**172 129**	**337 713**	**485 164**	**557 042**

Data from Nieftagodien[12]

Table 8.4 East Rand population by town percentage

	1921	1936	1946	1951
Benoni	28	23	18	20
Boksburg	22	15	12	12
Brakpan	14	16	17	15
Springs	11	26	23	21
Germiston	25	20	31	32
Total	100	100	100	100

Based on totals in Table 8.3.

Table 8.5 East Rand population by race: number

	1921	1936	1946	1951
Black	113 419	230 997	311 227	344 815
Coloured	2 612	5 051	7 340	9 418
Indian	1 906	3 108	4 178	5 801
White	54 192	98 557	162 419	197 008
Total	**172 129**	**337 713**	**485 164**	**557 042**

Data from Nieftagodien[12]

Table 8.6 East Rand population by race: percentage

	1921	1936	1946	1951
Black	65,9	68,4	64,1	61,9
Coloured	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,7
Indian	1,1	0,9	0,9	1,0
White	31,5	29,2	33,5	35,4
Total	100	100	100	100

Note: Based on totals in Table 8.5.

obtained from Noor Nieftagodien. By 1921 Benoni was the most populous town on the East Rand. By 1936 this position was held by Springs and in 1946 by Germiston. It is likely that Boksburg was the town with the largest population between the late 1890s and early 1900s. The changing numbers of the population of the five towns on the East Rand during the first half of the twentieth century was largely determined by sequencing of the developments of the mines in these towns. The post-World War II population numbers of these towns were driven, to a large extent, by the nature and pace of the development of the manufacturing sector.

Nieftagodien also summarises the population numbers on the East Rand from 1921 to 1951 by population/race group. The Black population was the largest group on the East Rand in 1921, at 65,9%, followed by White at 31,5%. The Coloured and Indian populations made up only 1,5% and 1,1% respectively. The data suggest that in relative terms the Black population declined between 1936 and 1951, from 68,4% to 61,9%, while the percentage of White residents in the area increased from 29,2% to 35,5% during this period.

As discussed elsewhere in this publication, although the Indians made up a very small percentage of the population on the East Rand during the early 1900s, the White ruling class viewed them as a threat due to their business acumen, and thus feared the competition they presented. The Coloured population on the East Rand during this period was also very small, and they appeared to have posed less of a threat to the White ruling class than Indians and Blacks/Natives. This scenario would later change as Coloured labourers acquired more skills.

A brief history of the Coloured people of South Africa

According to Van der Ross the Coloured people in South Africa originate from six main people groups: (i) Hottentots[13] (Khoi); (ii) Slaves;[14] (iii) Whites; (iv) Malays; (v) Bushmen (San) and (vi) Blacks (i.e., Bantu-speaking people). The slaves were of varied origin, coming mainly from Madagascar, Bengal (India) – the Malabar and Coromandel coasts – Ceylon (Sri Lanka), the East Indian islands, Angola, Guinea, and the Malays (Java and Bali, islands in present-day Indonesia). He also lists several what he calls 'intermediate groups': (i) Griquas: Hottentots and Slaves; (ii) Basters; (iii) Rehoboth Basters: Hottentots and Whites; (iv) the Dunns, Finns, Buys, etc.: Whites and Blacks; (v) Korannas: Hottentots and Blacks; and (vi) Nama. In addition, he refers to influences of people from St Helena, Mauritius, Mozambique, India and China. He also refers to Eurafricans, a term which he said was used mainly in the then-Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to refer to people of 'mixed' (primarily between Black and White) descent.[15]

Hans Heese describes Coloured people in the Cape towards the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century as follows:

> Between [these] two culturally and economically identifiable groups – Christian-Western [presumably White] and Muslim [Cape Malay] groups – there existed a group of individuals of whom some were slaves, some former slaves, some freeborn and some Baster-Hottentot. During the early 19th century this heterogenous group would form the core of what would become known as "Kaapse Kleurlinge" and which later be extended to include persons of Khoikhoi descent. This group included genetic elements of all race types that occur indigenously in South Africa, [the rest of] Africa, India and Indonesia. The only homogeneity that existed in relation to this group was cultural – all had adopted a Western lifestyle and Cape Dutch as vernacular.[16]

The history of the development of Coloured communities, especially in the old Cape Province (today's Western, Eastern and Northern Cape

provinces) can also partially be traced in the history of the various missionaries and missionary stations in the country. One such missionary station is Genadendal, previously known as Baviaanskloof. Dr Isaac Balie writes that the Khoi settled in Genadendal when Georg Schmidt started the Moravian missionary work in 1738.[17] According to Balie the Khoi consisted of several clans, of which the most important were the Namakwas and the Gorigorikwas. These two clans could be found from the Berg River north up to the Groen River, along the west coast of the country. The clans in the Overberg area, in which Genadendal is situated, were the Hessekwas and the Chainokwas.

Balie notes that over time some of the colonial soldiers stationed at the cattle outposts had children with Khoi women in the Overberg area.[18] The residents of Genadendal numbered 705 in 1798 and had increased to 1 457 in 1836. According to Balie the superintendent of Genadendal in his reports referred to the residents of the area who were the result of mixed relationships as 'bastards'. According to an 1824 survey about two-thirds of the residents of Genadendal had White fathers.[19] After the emancipation of slaves between 1834 and 1838 the number of residents in Genadendal increased dramatically.[20] On 1 January 1838 alone more than 600 people arrived in Genadendal to apply for residence.[21] As far as terminology is concerned, Balie refers to "Khoi-Khoi en bruinmense" (Brown people) and "Khoi en ander gekleurdes" (and other coloureds).[22]

When Ordinance 50 came into force in 1828, all free persons of colour in the Cape had the same rights, including political rights, as the White residents. After the slaves at the Cape were set free between 1 December 1834 and the beginning of 1838[23] about 39 000 people were added to the ranks of the Coloured people, bringing their number to about 49 800, compared to 68 600 White people.[24]

The political landscape and Coloured people before 1994

In *Myths and Attitudes: An inside look at the Coloured people* Van der Ross argues:

> When the Coloured and African voters pleaded with the English in 1902, after their victory in the Anglo-Boer War, to extend the political rights of non-Whites of the Cape to those in the Transvaal, the English refused to do so. They claimed that in time the "liberal" attitudes of the south would move northwards naturally, under the influence of "British justice". In fact, the reverse happened, and the illiberal attitudes of the north moved southwards![25]

The best-known of the older Coloured political organisations was the African People's Organisation (APO), formerly African Political Organisation, founded in 1902 and survived for almost four decades.[26] The charismatic Dr Abdullah Abdurahman was president of the APO from 1904 until his death in 1940. One of his proudest achievements was the establishment of the first high school for Coloured people, Trafalgar High School in Cape Town. The first of the aims and objectives of the APO, as stated in its 1923 constitution, was "The promotion of unity between the Coloured people of South Africa."[27]

Other predominantly Coloured political organisations formed before 1960 included the National Liberation League (NLL) founded in 1935 under the leadership of Mrs Z (Cissie) Gool, and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM)[28] established in 1943 under the leadership of Dr Goolam Gool, which were more radical organisations. The SA Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO), later called the Coloured People's Congress (CPC), was founded in 1953 and was aligned to the Congress Movement led by the ANC.[29] In his autobiography, *A Blow to the Hoop … The Story of my Life and Times*, Van der Ross elaborates on some of the tensions between the

moderate and radical political formations within the Coloured community since the late 1930s and how he found himself in the crossfire.[30] At the end of his autobiography he reflects: "My life has been a life of ideas, and ideas do not die". He observes that the numerous areas of work and public life in which he got involved demanded – amongst others – intelligence, objectivity, logic, respect for others, and humility.[31]

Since the 1940s several 'official' entities or institutions were created to attend to the political interests of the Coloured community. Most, if not all of these institutions, turned out to be what Van der Ross calls "a hoax". These institutions were: (i) The Coloured Advisory Council (1943), disbanded in 1950; (ii) The Union Council for Coloured Affairs (1959); (iii) The Coloured Management Committee (1966); (iv) The Coloured Person's Representative Council (1969-1980); and (v) House of Representatives (1984).

Van der Ross aptly observes:

> The system(s) did not fail only because the Coloured people would not co-operate, but more so because those who did co-operate found that they had no real power. Some agreed to participate – often at the cost of great personal inconvenience and of the friendship and trust of many of their fellows … they found that the new vehicle they had so eagerly mounted was stationary. You pedalled a great deal, but you got no further.[32]

He continues: "In each case, the people showed a certain desire to give the new institutions a chance; in each case its inherent weakness, its absence of power, *and* its separateness turned such willingness to co-operate as there was, to unqualified rejection, together with added suspicion and mistrust of Whites."[33]

David Saks in his masters thesis prepared at Rhodes University states that Van der Ross (whom he described as "always pragmatic"),[34] despite his reservations, defended his endorsement of the participation of the Labour Party in the House of Representatives as follows: "Pragmatically and politically, it was the only decision the Labour Party could have made. They had already committed themselves to working within the system. What was so generically different about taking part in the tricameral Parliament?"[35]

Al J Venter provides a brief and informative summary of how Coloureds in the Cape Province were disenfranchised in the 1950s and the birth of the CRC in 1960s:

> In 1951 the Separate Representation of Voters Act (1951) was passed (by a simple majority), providing for separate representation in Parliament and in the Cape Provincial Council and for the creation of a Council of Coloured Affairs. Later that same year (1951) the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court unanimously held the Act void because it did not follow the two-thirds procedure for changing an entrenched clause. A second attempt (ordinary law of Parliament) to overrule the decision by the Court was also declared invalid by the Court. At three subsequent occasions the Government called joint sessions in order to validate the 1951 Act but failed to win a two-thirds carrying vote.
>
> In 1955 an ordinary Act enlarged the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court to eleven members for the hearing of constitutional cases. Another ordinary Act enlarged the Senate and changed the method of election, with the result that the Government acquired a sufficient majority in that body to gain a two-thirds majority in a joint session. In 1956 this majority, with Parliament meeting in joint session, removed the entrenchment of non-White voting rights and validated the 1951 Act by the South Africa Amendment Act (Act No. 9 of 1956). In addition, the 1951 Act was revised by the Separate Representation of Voters Amendment Act (Act No. 30 of 1956). This time the validity of these Acts was upheld by the Appeal Court.[36]

On a separate voters' roll Coloured males living in the Cape Province could elect four White representatives to the House of Assembly and two White representatives to the Cape Provincial Council. Only 14 694 Coloured men voted in the first election on the separate voters' roll in April 1958. Of the 160 000 potential voters only 29 281 registered in 1958 and only 9 818 in 1963.

The Labour Party won 26 constituencies in the first election of the Coloured Persons Representative Council in 1969, the Federal Party 12, and the National (founded in 1967 and led by Dr Clifford Smith), and Republican Parties each took one constituency. The government appointed 20 members from the ranks of the Federal Party. Although Mr Tom Swartz of the Federal Party lost the election in his constituency Kasselsvlei (Bellville South), he was appointed and subsequently elected chair of the CPRC at its first session on 20 and 21 November 1969.[37]

The Unisa Documentation Centre for African Studies provides the following information on Mr Tom Swartz:

> Thomas Robert Swartz was born in 1904 and grew up in Umtata in the Transkei. He was educated at St John's College and apprenticed in the printing trade as a compositor and linotype operator. He worked at the *Territorial News* in Umtata for 25 years. He was active in [the] Coloured People's National Union (CPNU) and was elected Vice President at its conference in 1947. Mr Swartz was nominated as a member of the Union Council for Coloured Affairs (UCCA) and appointed its first chairman in 1959. He was elected as the first president of the Federal Coloured People's Party (FCPP) formed in 1964 and remained the party leader until July 1975.[38]

According to Saks 49,1% of registered voters voted in the 1969 CPRC elections, which made up only 35,7% of all potential voters.[39] This was largely due to an active campaign against the election. See Table 8.7 below for the number of votes received by the parties who contested this election.

By 1984 the House of Representatives replaced the CPRC, and the Labour Party participated in these elections, against earlier indications that they intended to boycott it. The elections of the House of Representatives (Coloured) and the House of Delegates (Indian), as part of the new Tricameral Parliamentary system, took place in August 1984 – a year after the launch of the United Democratic

The Coloured Persons' Representative Council Act (No. 49 of 1964) was promulgated in 1964. Al J Venter lists the parties and results of the 1969 election:

"The first elections for the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) were held on September 24, 1969, and the following six parties nominated candidates:

(i) The *Labour Party*, an anti-*Apartheid* party, established by Dr RE van der Ross in 1965, and led by Mr Martin Arendse (he was subsequently replaced as leader by Mr LS 'Sonny' Leon).[40]

(ii) The *Coloured People's Federal Party*, a Government-supporting party led by Mr Tom Swartz, chairman of the Executive.[41]

(iii) The *Coloured People's Republican Party*, largely counting the Griquas amongst its followers and led by Mr Tom Le Fleur, a veteran of Coloured politics in the Cape.

(iv) The *Coloured People's National Party*, a Transvaal-based faction in favour of promoting a separate Coloured identity *(Apartheid)*.

(v) The *Conservative Party of South Africa*, a pro-parallel development group led by Mr Isaac Petersen.

(vi) The *Conservative Party*, a Port Elizabeth-based faction also supporting separate development and led by Mr RH Fischat."[42]

Front (UDF) in Mitchells Plain, Cape Town and in a climate of increased political activities and militancy. It was therefore no surprise that the turnout for these elections was even lower than for the 1969 and 1975 CPRC elections. In 1984 at least 27 000 fewer Coloured people voted in the elections for the House of Representatives than the number of voters for the CPRC in 1969. Saks is of the opinion that Coloured and Indian voters had to "brave intimidation and ostracism" to vote.[43] He notes that only 30,9% of registered voters voted in the 1984 elections for the House of Representatives, which was a dismal 17,6% of all potential voters. See Table 8.8 for the number of votes received by the parties who contested this election. The Labour Party won 76 of the 80 seats.

Mohamed Adhikari writes that he was ridiculed in the mid-1980s for researching and writing about 'coloured identity' in South Africa. He says that this criticism began receding in 1992 "when Nelson Mandela himself urged ANC supporters to recognise 'coloured ethnicity as a political reality'".[44] Subsequently most political parties and commentators began to acknowledge the 'importance' of the Coloured vote when many voted for the National Party in the 1994 elections. Adhikari argues: "This more than any other development put paid to the idea that researching coloured identity was somehow un-progressive. Academic enquiry into coloured identity suddenly became respectable and rather popular, if not fashionable."[45]

Race dynamics post 1994

Not only have South Africans historically been categorised into different population groups, but at various times of our history different labels/ names were given to these population groups that were intended to be insulting, derogatory and to cause hurt. These words include 'Kaffir' directed at Black people, 'Boesman', 'Bushie', and 'Hotnot' directed at Coloured people, and 'Coolie' directed at Indians. Our constitution includes provisions to outlaw the use of words of this nature that are intended to infringe on the dignity of others, but as a young democracy we are still grappling to overcome the baggage of our past.

The use of the K-word by the likes of Penny Sparrow, Vicky Momberg and Adam Catzavelos in a very public manner during our recent past has caused much hurt and were dealt through our courts and through other public actions. The utterances of the likes of Jimmy Mzwanele Manyi in 2010, Kuli Roberts in 2011 and Nkosenjani Speelman, the mayor of Matjhabeng Local Municipality in the Free State, in 2020 directed at Coloureds were not only insulting but also racist. These utterances prompted some Coloured members of the ruling party, e.g., Trevor Manuel and Deon Leeuw, to take a public stance against such statements. The renowned author Chris van Wyk responded to Kuli Roberts in an open letter and she later, if somewhat reluctantly, retracted her comments after a public outcry.[46] In an opinion piece published by the Independent Media on 14 September 2020 senior ANC member Jeff Radebe noted, with reference to the mayor of Matjhabeng: "The Mayor was put through the ANC's disciplinary process", although many would question the severity of the disciplinary actions taken. Radebe is of the opinion:

> The Mayor's behaviour calls on the ANC to seriously respond to complaints from the Coloured community that under Apartheid they were not White enough, and now under post-Apartheid, they are not Black enough. Their cry might have at first been taken lightly, but when from amongst our own members, anti-Coloured behaviour rears its ugly head, we have to take note and act in line with the dictates of our convictions.[47]

Then there are those on the extremes of the political spectrum with very distinct fascist tendencies who continue to insult others, seemingly with impunity. Dr Imraan Buccus, an

academic with left-wing credentials and an adherent of the Black Consciousness philosophy, expressed his concerns in November 2020 about extreme forms of intolerance and prejudice within the ruling party by referring to a comment made by Fikile Mbalula in 2007, then the ANC Youth League president, that the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) was "nothing but Bombay". These tendencies are also often and very crudely articulated by members of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF). Buccus observes: "The EFF has been able to threaten and insult people of Indian descent without consequence."[48] The fact that these extremists are being treated with kid gloves has led many South Africans to feel uncomfortable in the country of their birth.

The position of people defined as Coloured in South Africa has historically been, and even today remains, complex. As was the case among many people of colour, politically they represent people with various ideological perspectives, from those who actively resisted the previous oppressive regimes and those who tacitly accepted the status quo, to those who participated in apartheid structures with the belief that they could change things from the inside. According to Mohamed Adhikari "coloured people exhibited a much more complex reaction to White supremacism that encompassed resistance as well as collaboration, protest as well as accommodation."[49] During the height of the apartheid era some opted for greener pastures elsewhere or went into political exile. Over a 20-year period, between the early 1950s and early 1970s – with a peak around 1966-1967, more than 10 000 Coloured people left South Africa in search of a better future. They emigrated mostly to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Britain. Some emigrated to African countries such as Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe), Zambia, Swaziland (today eSwatini) and Botswana. They were mostly professionals, and their departure left a void in the community. Some of the old guard of Reiger Park might remember a teacher from Boksburg, Mr Cyril Adolf, who left for Mongu, Zambia.[50] Significant numbers of Coloured professionals continued to emigrate until the late 1980s.

In 1979 Van der Ross observed: "it is frightening to consider to what an extent *the iron has entered into the soul* of the people. Perhaps this is the wrong metaphor; perhaps it would be more accurate to say to what extent we have been disillusioned, saddened, frustrated, embittered."[51] The expression refers to a sense of depression, bitterness or despair from being imprisoned or treated poorly. Adhikari refers to "the coloured community's position of weakness and feelings of vulnerability".[52] Saks refers to the Coloured people as "that down-trodden, humiliated, belittled, ignored, and manipulated minority, squeezed between rival nationalisms and denied their role in the destiny of the country to which they have shown so much loyalty."[53] And he expresses the hope "that the great apartheidean lie of the existence of a separate 'Coloured race' will be broken down and that the people currently classified as such will take their rightful places as full citizens in the land of their birth."[54] This feeling that being Coloured puts you on the margins of society is also articulated by Adhikari: "In my own work, emphasis has been placed on the ways in which the marginality of coloured people, their intermediate status in the racial hierarchy, negative racial stereotyping, and assimilationist aspirations together with a range of other factors have shaped their identity and influenced their social experience and political consciousness."[55]

Today, many South Africans are questioning the practice that only Black people in South Africa should be referred to as African. We are all South Africans and Africans, especially those born here.[56] The Khoi and San and their descendants are without question Africans. And if Walter Sisulu[57] and JJ Rawlings[58] and their descendants are Africans so are the many other 'mixed race' children of our beloved continent. I am also sure that the Arab people of North Africa, the people of Ethiopia and the many people on the islands of Africa, such as Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles,

etc., are all Africans, even though some of them might have lighter skin colours and a few might be of 'mixed' heritage. In 2020 a teacher and activist from Oudtshoorn, Glen Snyman, took a stance on this issue when he ticked the box 'African' instead of Coloured when he applied for a senior teaching position. For this the Department of Education in the Western Cape initially threatened him with disciplinary steps, but later backed off. He also wrote a novel dealing with race and racial classification, *The Blind Man's Race.*[59]

The 1996 and 2011 censuses classify the South African population into four 'race groups'; see Table 8.1. There were 4,63 million Coloured people in South Africa in 2011, making up 8,9% of the population, a decline from the 9,4% in 1970. Table 8.9 indicates that the three Cape provinces accounted for 83,2% of the Coloured population in 2011, with the Western Cape at 61,4%, the Eastern Cape at 11,8% and the Northern Cape at 10,0%. For Gauteng this figure stood at 9,3%, up from 7,5% in 1996.

In 2011, 75,8% of Coloured people reported their first spoken language as Afrikaans and 20,8% reported English as their first spoken language (see Table 8.10). Thus about 3,4% of Coloured people reported their first spoken language to be one of the other South African languages.

Although most people classified as Coloured have as their first (home) language Afrikaans, an increasing number, especially in the urban areas, are opting to speak English with their children and send their children to English-medium schools. I leave it to the experts and others to comment on this phenomenon, and to what extent our divided history and current political climate might be contributing factors to this shift.

Observations from recent elections in South Africa

The emergence of a scattering of smaller political parties in the 2019 and 2021 elections is not only a reflection of a loss of trust in 'established' political parties but also an indication that some of those referred to as minorities in South Africa are feeling marginalised and being left out. Parties like the Patriotic Alliance (PA), Good and others have during recent elections collectively attracted substantial numbers of Coloured voters. Besides the real possibilities of opportunism, the representatives of these parties probably do articulate the frustrations and despair of those who have decided to continue to use their vote as their voice to make a point, and not to be blinded (or bounded) by past loyalties, or simply stayaway and not vote. For example, the PA received close to 40% of the votes cast in Reiger Park (Ward 34) in the 2021 municipal elections, up from just 4% in 2016. In the 2019 national elections the PA received only 0,8% of the votes in Reiger Park, so it might be too early to conclude any definitive changes in voting patterns.

However, these election results might well be signs of the emergence of political parties (instead of a political party) which was (unfortunately) anticipated by Van der Ross: "Whereas Coloured people, remembering the injustices they suffered under previous political dispensations would be loath to return to racially based political parties, the chances are that there may be a return to such a party if they perceive that other groups are, indeed, racially orientated under the cover of non-racialism."[60]

Let us remain hopeful that our political leaders will take note of the concerns expressed by Mary Robinson (and many others), that as South Africans we will come to terms with our past (both the pain of the period before 1994 and the abuse of power and resources during our recent past) and that we will join forces to help steer our country on a stable and socially inclusive path.[65] By doing so we will give credence to the preamble of our Constitution "that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, united in our diversity".

Table 8.7 Voters in the 1969 CPRC elections

CPRC	Votes	
1969 – Elections	**Number**	**%**
Labour Party	136 845	46,4
Federal Party	90 055	30,5
Republican Party	30 241	10,3
National Party	23 260	7,9
Conservative Party	3 216	1,1
Independents	11 407	3,9
Total	295 024	100,0

Data from Saks[61]

Table 8.8 Voters in the 1984 HOR elections

House of Representatives	Votes	
1984 – Elections	**Number**	**%**
Labour Party	200 255	74,8
People's Congress Party	31 701	11,8
Federal Party	13 505	5,0
Reformed Freedom Party	3 216	1,2
Independents	19 204	7,2
Total	267 881	100,0

Data from Saks[62]

Table 8.9 Coloured population 1996 and 2011 censuses

	Coloured population - Census: Numbers			Percentage by province		
Province	**1996**	**2011**	**Difference**	**1996**	**2011**	**Difference**
Western Cape	2 215 850	2 841 494	625 644	60,2	61,4	1,2
Eastern Cape	473 338	544 650	71 313	12,9	11,8	-1,1
Northern Cape	442 185	461 782	19 597	12,0	10,0	2,0
Gauteng Province	274 496	429 529	155 033	7,5	9,3	1,8
KwaZulu-Natal	120 012	143 742	23 730	3,3	3,1	-0,2
Free State	79 005	85 113	6 108	2,1	1,8	-0,3
Northwest Province	46 985	70 199	23 214	1,3	1,5	0,2
Mpumalanga	21 869	36 359	14 490	0,6	0,8	0,2
Limpopo Province	9 152	16 215	7 062	0,2	0,4	0,1
TOTAL	**3 682 892**	**4 629 084**	**946 192**	100,0	100,0	

Source: Stats SA[63]

Table 8.10 First Language – 2011 census
Percentage of population by first language spoken: 2011

	Total	Coloured	Other
Afrikaans	13,5	75,8	15,2
English	9,6	20,8	29,5
IsiNdebele	2,1	0,2	2,1
IsiXhosa	16,0	0,6	1,9
IsiZulu	22,7	0,5	4,1
Sepedi	9,1	0,1	0,6
Sesotho	7,6	0,5	1,7
Setswana	8,0	0,9	2,4
Sign language	0,5	0,3	0,2
SiSwati	2,5	0,1	0,5
Tshivenda	2,4	0,1	0,5
Xitsonga	4,5	0,0	3,9
Other	1,6	0,1	37,4
Total - %	100,0	100,0	100,0
Total - number	**50 961 444**	**4 541 358**	**274 111**

Source: Stats SA[64]

Table 8.11 2021 Municipal elections Ward 34 (Reiger Park): Ekurhuleni

2021 - Municipal elections Ward 34: Ekurhuleni	PR	% PR	Ward	% Ward
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	66	1,1	49	0,8
African National Congress (ANC)	1 070	17,2	1 114	17,9
Democratic Alliance (DA)	1 874	30,0	1 632	26,2
Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)	259	4,2	330	5,3
Patriotic Alliance (PA)	2 507	40,2	2 317	37,2
Sub-total	**5 776**	**92,6**	**5 442**	**87,4**
Other	462	7,4	784	12,6
Total	**6 238**	**100**	**6 226**	**100,0**

Table 8.12 2016 Municipal elections
Ward 34 (Reiger Park): Ekurhuleni

2016 - Municipal elections Ward 34: Ekurhuleni	PR	% PR	Ward	% Ward
African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)	98	1,3	85	1,1
African National Congress (ANC)	1 763	23,3	1 841	24,3
Democratic Alliance (DA)	4 942	65,4	4 927	65,0
Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)	263	3,5	286	3,8
Patriotic Alliance (PA)	310	4,1	322	4,3
Sub-total	**7 376**	**97,6**	**7 461**	**98,5**
Other	185	2,4	114	1,5
Total	**7 561**	**100**	**7 575**	**100,0**

Table 8.13 2019 National elections:
Ward 34 (Reiger Park): Ekurhuleni (five voting districts)

2019 – National elections		
Party	**Votes**	**%**
DA	5 034	63,9
ANC	1 445	18,3
EFF	349	4,4
PA	64	0,8
Other	991	12,6
Total	**7 883**	**100,0**
Spoiled	224	
Valid Votes	8 107	68,6
Registered	11 825	

9

A brief history of the arrival of Indians in South Africa

A small group of Indians were brought to the Cape as slaves by the Dutch East India Company in the 17th century. They were mainly from Bengal and South India. Simon van der Stel's maternal grandmother, Monica da Costa (Monica of the Coast), was from Bengal. In 1820 a number of Indians from Bencoolen were brought to the Cape by a Mr Hare on the condition that the colony was not to be responsible for these Indians.

However, the majority of the ancestors of South African Indians were brought here between 1860 and 1911 with the approval of the British Government, initiated by Sir George Grey, as indentured labourers to work on the sugar cane plantations in Natal. Most of them were from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. On 4 October 1860 the *Belvedere* set sail from Calcutta (Kolkata) with 342 passengers. A few days later, on 11 October 1860, the *Truro* left Madras with 342 passengers and anchored in Port Natal on 16 November 1860, ten days before the *Belvedere* which docked in Port Natal on 26 November 1860. Some Indians coming to South Africa were referred to as 'Passenger Indians', as they made the journey to Natal at their own expense. The first of this group arrived in 1869. They were mainly entrepreneurs from Gujarat; many were traders, artisans, teachers and shop assistants. Immigration continued until 21 July 1911 when the last shipment of indentured Indians arrived in Durban on the *Umlazi XVIII*. Between 1860 and 1911 a total of 384 ships transported over 152 184 Indians to Natal.

The indentured Indians worked on the sugar cane fields or railways, or worked as servants, *ayahs* (nannies) for the White children, waiters or cooks. Indian men who could speak English were employed as *sirdars* (overseers). Many of these *sirdars* abused their powers and mistreated their fellow countrymen.

The Indian labourers were also very enterprising. After their daily slog in the fields many tilled the land around their homes and planted seeds from India. The crops that they harvested provided them with enough food and the excess they sold to the locals and even their employers. Once a worker had completed his period of indenture, he could return

NEW AGE, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1961

GHETTO PLAN FOR RAND NON-WHITES

Coloureds and Indians Must Leave Their Homes

JOHANNESBURG.

TWO thousand five hundred Indians and 3,000 Coloured people living in Germiston are to be cleared out of their homes under the Group Areas Act—but it is a mystery where they are to go.

Minutes of the Germiston City Council show that the removal plan has been worked on by the Council together with the Group Areas Board—which in fact sits in judgement on the Council scheme.

This came out at the hearing of the Group Areas Board in Germiston last week.

The charge that the Council acted in concert with the Board was not denied by either party.

Germiston Indians Stand to Lose:

- Mosques, temples and schools built by the community.
- 61 businesses with a total annual turnover of R1m. Some of these businesses have traded for more than 50 years.
- 77 Indians own improvements in the Bazaar worth R300,000.
- Property owned by Indians outside the Bazaar is worth R200,000.

This is the second time—the first was at Kempton Park—that Group Areas plans involve the wholesale removal of the entire Indian community from the town. It is suspected that this is part of a greater plan to move the 10,000 Indians of the East Rand into one ghetto in Benoni.

The hearing of the Board was held in the Germiston Town Hall, which was packed with Indians and Coloureds. Ironically, this is believed to be the first time that Non-Whites have been allowed into the Town Hall.

Germiston's Asiatic Bazaar was established before 1905 and Indians were given to understand six years later, when they were moved to a new site, that this would be their permanent home.

But their residential areas apart, Indians were in Germiston, they claim, before Germiston was ever known, and before the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand. The town, they will tell you, grew up around the Indians; Indians did not penetrate into the town.

INDIFFERENCE

Mr. J. Slovo, representing the Indian community, told the Board: "The callous indifference shown by the municipality to the fate of the Indian community stems from an attitude that it is right and proper to approach the problem of race separation as if those who are Non-White can have no claim to justice and equity. This attitude makes a mockery of the countless promises that the Act would be administered with fairness to all races."

Mr. Slovo said that the Indian community did not apologise for living in Germiston and breathing its air. "They assert their right to remain there not as a matter of grace, but equally with any other citizen brought up there. We ask not for concessions, nor for an indulgence, but for our rights."

The proposers of the Group Areas scheme had approached the problem, said Mr. Slovo, as an agricultural officer would deal with cattle culling.

Not telling the communities where they were to be moved amounted to virtually wiping them off the map, the Group Areas Board was told.

GERMISTON GROUP AREAS: Above: The Indian community attended the hearing in large numbers. Below: Coloured women look at the map of Germiston—not that it shows them where to go.

Forced removals from Germiston (*New Age*, 23 February 1961).

to India or stay in South Africa to find employment. As many could not afford to return home they chose to remain in Natal. Others remained as they had managed to prosper here; many leased or bought small plots of land that they cultivated.

On 13 February 1871 the first group of repatriated ex-indentured Indians returned to India on the *Red Riding Hood*. Some of them lodged complaints at the protector's office about unfair conditions of employment and ill treatment by their employers in Natal. An official Board of Enquiry was set up to investigate these claims, and published a report entitled *The Coolie Commission* on 11 September 1872 that documented the grievances of the Indian immigrants. Subsequently the Indian Laws and Regulations were passed. A few years later the Wragg Commission of 1885-1887 also published a report. The Indian Immigration Act, Act XXI of 1883, came into force on 1 April 1886.[1]

The Indian 'question' from the 1880s to the early 1900s in South Africa

In 1887 The Indian Immigration Restriction Act spearheaded by Mr Harry Escombe disallowed

Indian competition in trade. In 1894 the annual grant in aid of Indian immigration was abolished and pressure was put on the Indians whose contracts had expired to return to India. Act 17 of 1895 imposed an annual licence of £3 (a poll tax) on every indentured Indian who did not return home. However, immigration still continued on a large scale until 1897. By 1910 there were 100 000 Indians in Natal. The 1913 Immigration Act restricted the movements of Indians. From around the 1880s Indians moved to the Transvaal from Natal and the then Republican Government had to concede to free rights of residence and trade, as the Indians claimed to be British subjects. The Orange Free State had (pre-emptively) passed a law prohibiting Indians and other Coloured persons from trading or carrying on any business whatsoever.[2]

At a public meeting held by the Springs Chamber of Commerce on 8 May 1920 a certain Mr Phillips of Roodepoort addressed the gathering on the Indian 'question' in South Africa. According to him, Lord Milner's government gave instructions in 1903 to refuse the issuing of any further Asiatic trading licences and he was of the view that if Milner's administration had introduced legislation to adopt this directive, the Asiatic 'question' would not have been an issue. He also complained that little was done to enforce the Gold Law of 1908 and the Township Act.[3] By 1920 there were 47 Indian traders in Krugersdorp.

The Passive Resistance Movement initiated by Mr Mohandas Gandhi ended when an agreement between him and General Jan Smuts was reached on 30 June 1914. This agreement inter alia provided that "an Indian carrying on business on that day would be allowed to continue, but there was to be no further migration."[4] Phillips argued that if the arrangement between General Smuts and Mr Gandhi in 1914 had been properly enforced, the problem of increasing numbers of Indian traders could have been averted, and "if the problem is not addressed it would only be a question of time before the White trader disappears". He argued that

> those [Indians] who at present held [trading] licences [presumably in "White areas"] must carry on as long as they live, the licence must not be transferred, and when they die, the licence dies with them. The others must live in segregated areas, and if they desired to acquire property, they could do so in those areas.[5]

Mohandas Gandhi arrived in Natal in 1893, founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and settled in Johannesburg in 1907. In his reply to a 1914 letter from Smuts, Gandhi wrote on 30 June 1914:

> The passing of the Indians' Relief Bill and this correspondence finally closes the passive resistance struggle which commenced in the (*sic*) September of 1906 and which to the Indian community cost much physical suffering and pecuniary loss and the Government much anxious thought and consideration.
>
> As the Minister is aware, some of my countrymen have wished me to go further. They are dissatisfied that the trade licences laws of the different provinces, the Transvaal Gold Law, the Transvaal Townships Act, the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885 have not been altered, so as to give them full rights of residence, trade, and ownership of land.
>
> Complete satisfaction cannot be expected until full civic rights have been conceded to the resident Indian population.[6]

The Indian Relief Act (1914) mentioned in the letter also gave recognition to Indian marriages and abolished the £3 poll tax.

10

Community-based organisations in Reiger Park

Since its 'establishment' during the first half of the 1960s various community-based organisations have served the community of Reiger Park over the years and played an important role in its development. The most enduring of these organisations/institutions are the various churches and the single mosque in the area. The Child Welfare Society and the Care of the Aged are two organisations that have been active for many years. A number of sports umbrella organisations and sports clubs, especially soccer clubs, have also been active for many years. Numerous other organisations have come and gone.

Despite the hardships and, in some parts of the location, the overcrowding that many residents had to endure because of inadequate provision of land for housing, and lack of affordable housing and other social amenities, the community of Reiger Park, like those in many other locations, developed reasonably close bonds. As a rule we knew who our neighbours were and, in many instances, knew the names of most of the people in our streets. Assistance in times of extreme need was on hand most of the time. The first level of support was family and friends, then the churches, followed by neighbours, colleagues and various informal and formal voluntary organisations.

Reiger Park is in size a relatively small area, yet it consists of at least twelve sub-areas, most with unique informal names. These areas range from sub-economic, poor to relatively affluent areas. One of the 'positive' consequences of the Group Areas Act was the social interaction of people across the class divide. We schooled together and attended the same churches. This does not mean that social classes were not a reality, it was and still is, but the opportunities to interact and share a close bond were that much easier. This reality struck me when I went to Cape Town to further my studies in Bellville in 1975. The social divide in the Cape Town metropole among the Coloured community was very evident and although I stayed on campus in a university hostel, we could sense that those living in more affluent areas rarely mixed with people in the 'schemes' *(skemas)*. Post 1994 the social dynamics within the Coloured community and among all

races have changed quite a lot, is still evolving, and as a society we might be transitioning from one based on a legally enforced racial division to one based on a class division, with some of the racial and/or ethnic divides still lingering. How we as a country manage this transition, maintain a sense of social cohesion, and ensure sufficient social mobility will be a gauge of our success as a nation. The key determinants will be the extent to which we manage to address the problems of unemployment, poverty, and inequality on our journey towards more inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development.

When I returned to Reiger Park in 1985 with my wife and our one-year old daughter, we were part of a group of young professionals who started the East Rand Alumni Society (ERAS), whose aim was to mobilise ex-learners of Oosrand High School to network and become involved in community-based projects. In the early 1990s I assisted the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee with the challenges they aimed to address, mainly excessive municipal utility bills at the time. For a while I also served on the boards of the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa (AFM) in Reiger Park and that of the local South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA).

The East Rand Alumni Society (ERAS)

The East Rand Alumni Society was officially launched in December 1985. Membership was open to any person who was an ex-pupil of Oosrand High School. Other individuals who subscribed to the aims and objectives of the society, in terms of its constitution, were accepted as associated members with full voting rights after a period of two years. The ERAS Constitution listed its aims and objectives as:

a. To promote activities in the field of education and sports designed to assist members, pupils and students.
b. To promote cultural and social activities with the aim of stimulating discussion, expression and fellowship.
c. To encourage members to participate actively in community affairs.
d. To assist other social, cultural and educational organisations.

One of the first areas that the ERAS focused its attention on was that of preschool education. The funding proposal for the establishment of the Reiger Park Pre-School and Educare Centre is dated March 1987. This document highlighted some of the educational challenges facing the community, with specific attention given to the extremely high drop-out rate at Oosrand High, the only local high school at the time. The drop-out rate (measured by comparing enrolments in Std 6 versus enrolments in Std 10, four years later) between 1966 and 1985 averaged 80%. By 1986 two of the three primary schools in Reiger Park had one preschool class each and each preschool class could accommodate only 25 children of 5 and 6 years old. This meant that only 50 children in Reiger Park had access to affordable or free quality early childhood education. At the beginning of 1986 around 300 children of preschool-going age were turned away by these two schools due to the limited space. At the time there was also only one crèche in Reiger Park, accommodating about 60 toddlers aged between 6 months and 4 years, which was, and still is, administered by the Child Welfare Society.

After much information gathering and analysis the ERAS decided to initiate the establishment of a preschool in Reiger Park that could accommodate between 240 and 300 children, and in conjunction an Educare Centre for the continued education of preschool teachers, childminders and parents. During 1986 the ERAS wrote to four churches in the area requesting the use of their halls on their church premises as a temporary preschool facility. Three churches responded favourably and on 19 January 1987 a preschool accommodating 150 children was opened in the church hall of the United Congregational-Ebenezer Church. This

temporary preschool was initiated with the cooperation of the head of the Soeterus Afterschool Centre, Aunty Lilly Plaatjies, which she operated from the church hall of the Methodist Church.

At the beginning of 1987 the Boksburg Town Council agreed to donate erf 383 to the ERAS for the construction of the Reiger Park Pre-School and Educare Centre. Both the Anglican Church (Diocese of Johannesburg) and the United Congregational-Ebenezer Church had options to buy this erf but willingly gave up their options in favour of the ERAS. Thereafter fundraising for the construction of the centre commenced; the estimated figure for this purpose was R350 000. The Reiger Park Pre-School and Educare Centre was completed under the watchful eyes of Dr A Andrews, President of the ERAS, and opened its doors in mid-1988. The Reiger Park Trust was the vehicle through which most of the funding was channelled. The main sponsors of the Trust were Shulton South Africa and SA Cyanamid. These sponsors were represented on the Trust by Mr Mike Douglas and Mr Sundra Naidoo respectively.

I managed to preserve some of the annual reports delivered by the various Presidents of the ERAS and below is a summary of those reports between 1989 and 1995. The first President of the ERAS was Dr Anthony (Tony) Andrews, but I unfortunately could not lay my hands on any of the reports during the formative years of the ERAS.

In his annual report on 24 June 1989 the President of the ERAS, Dr Billy Jacobs, referred to the Reiger Park Pre-School and Educare Centre and the annual career week as the two jewels in the crown of the alumni. In May 1989 the Centre hosted one of the biggest and most successful Educare Awareness weeks ever held on the East Rand. The

Members of the East Rand Alumni Society, which was established in 1985 by concerned former students of East Rand Secondary School with the aim of actively enhancing socio-economic development and growth for the community of Reiger Park, comprises, standing (from left): Keith du Preez, Dr Rocky Skeef, Dr Tony Andrews, Barold Moosa, Cecil Monden and Kevin Ehrenreich, president of the society. Seated: Norma Page, Elsie Kok, Yolande Nicol and Yvette Nicol.

Bursary loans for students

The East Rand Alumni Society (Eras), which is based in Reiger Park, recently presented bursary loans totalling R29 000 to 14 students who are embarking on university or technikon studies.

The presentation ceremony, which was held in the Eras Educare and Resource Centre, is a result of a scheme which has come to fruition with the co-operation of the Reiger Park Trust.

According to a spokesman, with its commitment to the promotion and advancement of technical and commercial education, Eras realises that one of the means of advancing and encouraging these study fields is through a bursary loan scheme.

This scheme was given a boost by a donation of R80 000 from the Rev L Sibidi, chairman of the Trust for Educational Advancement in South Africa (Teasa), who was guest speaker at the society's Teachers Honours function in 1989 when 35 teachers were honoured for their dedication and service to the community and to their profession.

The Reiger Park Trust is made up of five executive members from Eras, two prominent members of the community and three corporate members from South African Cyanamid, a company which employs a large section of the Reiger Park community and gives financial aid to Eras.

To ensure ongoing student assistance Eras has appealed to parents, teachers, businesses and students to support the fund-raising efforts for this scheme.

On April 19 there will be a dance at the Civic Centre and in September there will be a big walk.

The 14 students who received bursary loans of between R1 000 and R4 000 are Anthony Petersen, Rudi Speelman, Rodney Mankoland, Lynette Khan, Collette Handel, Peter Barendse, Roger Nicol, Peter Lemmetjies, Natalie Lyons, Roland Williams, Dalene Lucinda Law, Earl Ayer, Lesland Solomons and Phillip Lion.

East Rand Alumni Society (*Boksburg Advertiser*, 1991).

Table: 10.1 Oosrand High School Enrolments and drop-out rates

Year	Enrolment				
	Std 6	Std 8	Std 10	% Std 6 to Std 10: Still enrolled	% Std 6 to Std 10: Drop-out rate
1966	144				
1967	217				
1968	227		11		
1969	182		17		
1970	205		11	7,6%	92,4%
1971	213		21	9,7%	90,3%
1972	197		23	10,1%	89,9%
1973	205		24	13,2%	86,8%
1974	213		54	26,3%	73,7%
1975	225	117	50	23,5%	76,5%
1976	222	140	39	19,8%	80,2%
1977	319	151	26	12,7%	87,3%
1978	330	181	48	22,5%	77,5%
1979	357	246	35	15,6%	84,4%
1980	504	208	73	32,9%	67,1%
1981	501	201	84	26,3%	73,7%
1982	450	225	71	21,5%	78,5%
1983	444	229	83	23,2%	76,8%
1984	532	284	130	25,8%	74,2%
1985	420	270	77	15,4%	84,6%
Average				**19,1%**	**80,9%**

Source: Own calculations, data provided by Oosrand High School

annual career week in April 1989, with Mr Kevin Ehrenreich as chair of the Education subcommittee, was also a major success. That year, for the first time, learners from Alra Park, Geluksdal and Eden Park were bussed in to attend.

Other projects that the Alumni participated in during that year was a primary school feeding scheme in co-operation with the Reiger Park Trust, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (Pastor Zinn) and several voluntary housewives; the Vista University's Cognitive Development Programme; the Junior Achievement Programme; and a Youth Leadership Development Programme. About 1 000 primary school children benefited from the school feeding scheme.

In his annual report delivered on 30 June 1990 the President of the ERAS, Mr CH Morden, referred to the excellent guest speakers who addressed various events of the Society during that year. These speakers included Mr Johnny Issel (guest speaker at the previous AGM), Dr Garth le Pere (who facilitated a Strategic Planning Workshop of the ERAS, held at the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre in September 1989), Rev Lebamang Sebidi (guest speaker at the Teachers' Honours Evening on 25 November 1989), Mr Robin Camay and Ms Brenda Weimers. The latter two were guest speakers at the Alumni's monthly social functions.

The preschool grew from strength to strength and the career week expanded its reach. At that year's career week schools from Vosloorus and Katlehong were also in attendance. Mr Kennedy Skosana from Duduza presented an entertaining but highly focused study skills workshop on each of the evenings. The Bursary Fund subcommittee came to its own right during 1989-90. This subcommittee also organised the Teachers' Honours evening.

During 1990-91 the Bursary Fund (renamed the Study Loan Scheme) provided interest-free loans to twelve students and the education subcommittee, by now under the leadership of Dr Rocky Skeef, arranged another successful career week, with more teachers' involvement this time. A music school was launched as part of the after-school activities at the Educare Centre. On 14 December 1990 the ERAS celebrated its fifth anniversary. Unfortunately during the year the Reiger Park Trust suffered a major setback with the announcement by its main sponsors, Shulton South Africa and SA Cyanamid, that they would cease funding the Trust by the end

Kevin Ehrenreich and Leonard Petersen (Ehrenreich collection).

of that calendar year. Mr KA Ehrenreich was the President of the ERAS during 1990-91.

During 1992-93 the ERAS adopted the slogan TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) to re-energise its members. This was necessary as the difficult economic environment and uncertainties during the period of political transition seemed to have had a negative effect on the community's spirit at large and also on members of the ERAS. Dr David Molapo was a guest speaker at an ERAS event during the year and also at the AGM on 26 June 1993. The activities of the Society that year were driven by four subcommittees: the Study Loan, Pre-School and Educare, Education, and Feeding Scheme. Fourteen study loans totalled R31 000 were granted. This subcommittee was by now led by Mrs Elsie Kock. The fundraising for this scheme was augmented by previous beneficiaries who started to repay their study loans.

The President in his annual address noted that he was pleased to see that the Pre-School and Educare Centre were doing well, despite some parents having difficulties paying their monthly fees, and the 'competition' posed by the other preschools that had opened by then in Reiger Park. Dr Rocky Skeef was the chair of this subcommittee. The Education subcommittee under the leadership of Mr Kevin Ehrenreich again organised a successful career week and Dr Billy Jacobs and Mrs Jan du Preez were responsible for the successful running of the primary school feeding scheme. The ERAS embarked on hiking as a social and fitness activity during that year, and some members participated in two hikes. Mr CH Morden was the President of the ERAS during 1992-93.

On 19 November 1994 the President of the ERAS, Mr Henry JJ Jeffreys, reported on what he described as "probably the worst (year) in our existence but which at the same time gave us some insights on how to tackle the future and again start doing what we do best: delivering the goods." He reported that the Educare Centre, the music school, the after-

school project, the study loan scheme, and the feeding scheme were still operating, but clearly all was not well. What was disappointing to him was that during the year at least four executive members and/or chairs of the various subcommittees resigned from their positions, although they remained members of the ERAS, to further their studies or due to other work-related commitments. In addition, the principal of the Educare Centre, Mrs Lynette Andrews, had resigned. After that the after-school project was closed, the music school was on the decline and the Study Loan Scheme faced financial difficulties. A decision was taken to partner with other organisations to take over some of the activities of the ERAS. Despite these challenges the majority of the (remaining active) members felt the organisation should continue with its core activities and that there was still a role for it.

In his 1995 annual report Dr Andrews reflected on the waning of the euphoria after the first democratic elections on 27 and 28 April 1994 and its impact on the community at large and also on the ERAS. By then a number of the members had moved out of Reiger Park to the surrounding, previously white, suburbs. Dr Andrews referred to expectations among some members of the community that 'the government will provide' and noted the 'sudden drying up of private sector sponsorship' for community-based projects. The Reiger Park Pre-School/Educare Centre was still functioning under the able leadership of its new principal, Mrs Baby Simons (née Thompson), and delivering quality education although the new preschools in the area were beginning to erode the number of children and fee-paying parents at the Centre. Mr Bob Triegaardt was still operating the music school, but with reduced numbers. Application for funding for the Educare Centre to the government was unsuccessful and RDP funding was stuck in endless red tape, with the new not-so-efficient government bureaucracy. The Study Loan Scheme was still operating and was reasonably funded, thanks to wise investments of the initial capital raised. Dr Andrews also reported on academic achievements by some members, senior appointments within government and the private sector for some, and the unfortunate resignation from the ERAS by Mr Kevin Ehrenreich. Dr Andrews pleaded with members: 'Do not let your new-found mobility detrimentally affect your community participation. Much has been achieved, much still needs to be done.'

In December 1995 the East Rand Alumni Society celebrated a decade of community involvement and networking. The event was a far cry from the fifth-year celebrations a few years earlier, a sign that it had probably moved beyond its peak and maybe even its initial purpose. As a family the Mordens moved to Kimberley in late 1996 and lost touch with developments in Reiger Park and the ERAS. A few years later the ERAS effectively closed shop and handed the buildings, Reiger Park Pre-School and Educare Centre over to a new community-based organisation, Harambe.

Harambe Community Development and Resource Centre

With the decline of the activities of the East Rand Alumni Society a new organisation emerged: the Harambe Community Development and Resource Centre, or in short Harambe. In the late 1990s to early 2000s a small group of men and women under the chairmanship of Mr Gregory Fisch came together to form the Harambe Community Development and Resource Centre to help address, in the words of Jerry Theys, centre manager, some of "the decay in the community". They attempted to co-ordinate various community activities and to promote the concept of life-long learning. The mission of the organisation was uplifting and promoting the quality of life of the community through poverty reduction, and supporting education, recreation, sports, arts and culture. Their objective was to empower the people so

that they may pursue sustainable livelihoods. All services offered by Harambe were free of charge. The specific services they offered included, but were not limited to: computer literacy training; access to an internet café where, amongst others, matric students could do research; recruitment and placement, and entrepreneurship and business linkages. Co-operatives were formed to manufacture school uniforms; and up-and-coming local business owners were assisted with training and registration.

In one of their newsletters, they reported that their job placement programme received 3 378 applications, that they placed 379 people in jobs and secured learnerships for 46 individuals. The organisation developed a very successful relationship with Comair Limited for the placement of some unemployed people. Harambe also partnered with the Department of Social Services, the Development Bank of South Africa, the City of Ekurhuleni, Novell, Jonda, Diebold South Africa, the Greater Boksburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Patrew Transport, Great Africa Seating, Proman, Vercon, Rand Plastic and others.

Harambe thus successfully entered into agreements with a number of public and private organisations. However, later some of the funds and donated computers and flat screen television sets were misallocated. Mr Theys suspected a level of corruption and after unsuccessfully trying to address this issue he resigned. Harambe later lost a subsidy they received from government and over time their activities were severely scaled down. In response to accusations in April 2015 of poor management and that it had lost its original purpose of youth empowerment, the organisation countered by stating that the centre had made great strides in tackling skills shortages, technological illiteracy and poverty.[1]

The Reiger Park Community Forum, in partnership with the Reiger Park Business Forum, hosted their first Township Economic Empowerment and Business Expo on 28 September 2019. On this occasion the 'Old Harambe Centre' was relaunched as the Reiger Park Community Centre. Fana Peters, executive member of Reiger Park Business Forum and adviser of the Reiger Park Community Forum, noted 'that the aim of the event was to show the community of Reiger Park that this building is for the community of Reiger Park'. He said that the centre had been handed over to the Reiger Park Business Forum more than a year before the launch, for them to be the custodians of the premises. Their main goal was to use these facilities as "a vital office to enable small businesses to work from here. We also want to have afternoon classes for learners and to assist local businesses for training needs."[2]

The Reiger Park Consultative Forum

Towards the end of 2014 a few individuals met to form an organised voice – The Reiger Park Consultative Forum – to persuade about twenty organisations in Reiger Park, including NGOs, organised religious bodies, sport bodies, political parties, and cultural bodies to engage with the provincial government in a more united way. There also appears to have been unhappiness in the way various government-funded projects and/or organisations account for the funds they received. A memorandum was drafted to be submitted to the premier of the province (on 23 November 2014) which listed concerns regarding the withdrawal of charges in the Taegrin Morris case, the senior prosecutor at the Boksburg Magistrate Court, safety and security, the Reiger Park Police Station, Community Policing Forum and taxi violence.[3] No additional information about the subsequent or current activities of this Forum is available and it is not known whether this Forum evolved into the Reiger Park Community Forum referred to above.

The Reiger Park- Delmore Civic Committee

The socio-economic conditions of many households in Reiger Park deteriorated during 1992. Higher levels of unemployment due to worsening economic conditions and uncertainties that accompanied the violence during the period of political transition were contributing factors. The ever-present housing needs and increased number of backyard dwellings were manifestations of this worsening environment. Many households, especially in Excuse Me, the Doubles, Popcorn Valley and the Flats could not cope financially and were falling behind with their municipal accounts.

During the latter half of 1992, following two mass meetings, the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee was formed. Mrs Winnie Bosman who resided in Excuse Me emerged as the leader of this protest movement. The other committee members were George Peters, Faried James, Cecil Morden, Mrs Queeny Visagie, Mike Say and Barold Moosa. The Committee sent a letter to the Boksburg Town Council on 16 October 1992 demanding that: (i) all evictions due to arrears be stopped immediately; (ii) the faulty and very high municipal utility bills be corrected; (iii) an independent expert be appointed to test all electricity and water meters, for the account of the municipality; (iv) that representatives of the community be allowed to observe the reading of water and electricity meters from November 1992 to September 1993; (v) if no agreement could be reached with regard to points (i) to (iv) by 22 October 1992, a maximum fixed charge per month per household for electricity of R80 during Spring/ Summer and R100 during Autumn/Winter be imposed, and (vi) consideration be given to install pre-paid electricity meters, similar to those installed in other locations by Eskom.

A follow-up letter was sent to the Town Council on 9 December 1992 dealing with all the issues raised in the letter dated 16 October 1992 and in addition requesting that all legal costs, interest charges on arrears, and reconnection fees reflected on individual household utility bills be scrapped. Consideration should be given to split current charges for municipal services and arrears, that they be listed on two separate accounts/statements and that the plight of pensioners be given special attention. At a public meeting on 9 February 1993 it was decided to hold a public protest march on 25 February 1993 and to request for the dissolution of the Reiger Park Management Committee. The Management Committee of the Boksburg Town Council subsequently agreed that the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee address them on 10 March 1993. *The Beam* newspaper reported: "Tempers ran high at the public meeting organised by the Reiger Park– Delmore Civic Association, to discuss the high water and electricity bill in the area."[4] The paper reported on feedback given to the community by the office bearers of the Civic Association from their interaction with the Boksburg Town and the lack of response to their demands.

On 14 April 1993 and again on 26 October 1993 letters were sent to the Boksburg Town Council protesting the proposed amalgamation of the Boksburg Management Committee with the current members of the Reiger Park Management Committee, although only a temporary arrangement, given the political transition that was underway. Another public meeting was held on 17 May 1993. A letter was sent to the Town Council on 19 May 1993 acknowledging receipt of a letter from the Boksburg Town Council responding to various demands raised with the Council during the preceding months. During May and June 1993 public meetings were held and letters were exchanged with the Town Council to address the concerns of the flat dwellers in Reiger Park. On 25 April 1994 the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee wrote to the Chairpersons of The Greater Boksburg Forum requesting representation on the Forum. Mr George Peters was subsequently appointed as the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee's (the

Association's) representative on the Boksburg Local Government Transitional Council.

The *Business Day* reported on 21 September 1994: "The recent protest in Coloured communities on the West and East Rands (Eldorado Park, Coronationville, Westbury, Newclare, Reiger Park, and Alra Park-Nigel) have been attributed to dissatisfaction among residents over their electricity bills and the demand for a flat municipal service rate."[5] The report also refers to demands by the civic associations in these areas for presentation on the Transitional Metropolitan Councils and concerns about the uneven approach to municipal arrears in Black and Coloured townships.

The Community Crisis Centre

Over the next two years the Reiger Park-Delmore Civic Committee also disappeared from the scene and in the late 1990s Winnie Bosman turned her energies to help the marginalised, initially focusing on the aged, when she opened the Community Crisis Centre.

Mrs Bosman was the regional winner of the Sowetan Community Builder of the Year in 2008. In an interview with the *Sowetan* in April 2009 she said: "I was retrenched 10 years ago, and I did not know where to turn. My life fell to pieces and there was no one to help me. I realised that we needed an advice centre to help people in need. At the time I was doing volunteer work with the elderly and I arranged for them to receive their pensions while sitting comfortably in a hall."[6] Later Mrs Bosman and other volunteers went on a government-sponsored training in HIV/Aids counselling.

The centre's caregivers identify orphans and vulnerable children, help them to apply for child support grants, and check on their well-being where families have taken them in. The Centre was part of the Expanded Public Works Programme, employs auxiliary social workers and operates a lifeline through the police station. They also provide home-based care for a number of terminally ill patients.

The Centre is still operating under the leadership of Mrs Elaine Appies, who took over the reins following the death of Mrs Bosman.

Re-imagine Reiger Park

During 2011 a new organisation was formed in Reiger Park, called Re-imagine Reiger Park. The website of this organisation describes its history and objectives as follows:

> Amidst the on-going civil instability and recent [2011] gang violence in Reiger Park one young man rose up and sought to make a difference. Brandon Isaacs went live on Radio 702 with David O' Sullivan to raise the plight of the inhabitants of the township. Amongst David O' Sullivan's listening audience that afternoon was Sam Alexander. Moved by Brandon's passion, Sam, a former resident of Reiger Park and former CEO of The Pacific Institute (TPI), met with Brandon to see if TPI could contribute to his vision for a better Reiger Park. Sam requested Brandon to invite 20 key people in Reiger Park whom he could address and inspire to join hands in making a difference.
>
> On 8 May 2011 [there was] a follow-up meeting [that] over one hundred people attended. The project was named 'Re-imagine Reiger Park'. The 100 attendees were divided into six clusters: Education, Faith, Community Safety, Businesses, NGOs and Youth & Environment. Four more clusters: Early Childhood & Women Development, Substance Avoidance, Sport, Arts & Culture and Employment & Opportunities were added later.
>
> Each cluster presented a few challenges to be re-imagined for a better Reiger Park. Each cluster identified three people, with passion for and commitment to lasting change, to experience TPI's *Investment in Excellence* (IIE) process, to assess its applicability and relevance to the envisaged transformation of Reiger Park.
>
> From 21 May 2011, eighteen leaders embarked

Re-imagine Reiger Park promoted on the old Beer Hall / Community Hall (CH Morden, 2021).

> on a 6-day action-packed journey, spread over a 10-week period. As one of the first projects sixteen parolees were selected to experience IIE, starting on 27 June 2011. Their collective testimony was: "if we can change and see a new Reiger Park, we believe so too can others!". With sponsorship by MERSETA, 30 High School Educators embark[ed] on IIE between August and November 2011 with significant positive results, they "upped the standard" in their classrooms and beyond.[7]

The call by the organisation was: "We all need to step up and stand together. Join the Re-imagine community, spread the word and learn how you can make a lasting difference by becoming involve[d]". The website describes Re-imagine as a

> non-profit organisation that is continuously exploring and working towards ways to improve the quality of life and learning for youth growing up in our townships. We believe when every young person has [the] guidance and tools they need to thrive academically, socially and emotionally, we [can] help secure a brighter and healthier future for communities, thus increasing the chances for more youth to graduate from high school, to go to university, get good jobs and stay out of the justice system. We encourage youth to say NO to negative influences and say YES to the future by arming them with tangible tools for gainful employment and success in adulthood.[8]

The directors of the organisation at the time were Elrich Oliphant, Sam Alexander, Justin Kettle and Brandon Isaacs. I came to learn about Re-imagine Reiger Park through one of my ex-pupils, Trevor Reeby. The website of the organisation contains a number of photos of numerous events and interventions it facilitated and videos of young people expressing their appreciation for internships which were made possible by the organisation.[9]

The Reiger Park Bulletin – social media

Out of concern that the mainstream media seldom report on the positive news in Reiger Park and Windmill Park, an alternative media platform to report on the achievements of the communities and to create awareness and build better communities, was created.

Initiated by Justus Abrams, *The Reiger Park Bulletin*, an independent communication platform, was established in 2014 with the aim of creating a mechanism where positive news can be shared by a community that felt marginalised and misrepresented. It is also used as a means to disseminate information and news quicker, easier and more effectively. The intention is to help inspire and motivate people to strive for greatness.[10]

The above is a brief summary of the activities of just a few of the community-based organisations that were active in Reiger Park over the years. Various contributors to this book have made references to other organisations, including sport clubs, churches, welfare organisations, cultural organisations, etc. I am sure that a follow-up publication would be able to (and should) fill the gaps to record the heroic efforts by many to ensure the upliftment of a community who at times felt forgotten and marginalised, and in some instances still do.

The poem, "Verlos van die ghetto" (Set free from the ghetto) by Desmond Tombeen reveals much of the circumstances, internal battles and choices some people face in Reiger Park. Tombeen (Mannetjies) and I were fellow matriculants in 1974. He was a bright fellow, but our paths separated after matric, and he became one of the feared gangsters in Reiger Park. He completed his law studies through Unisa despite many troubled years on the streets of Reiger Park. My school friend Billy van Ross – we were in the same class in 1966 (standard 3), and again 1970 and 1971 (standards 6 and 7) – also turned to a life of violence, but managed to redeem himself. Van Ross later left Reiger Park for the Northern Cape, probably to escape (perhaps the inevitability of) slipping back into the underworld. Desmond Tombeen took a different path, and in the end met a violent death.

Verlos van die ghetto
Desmond Tombeen

Sukses het my van die ghetto bevry.
Is ek regtig bly?
Voel ek rêrig vry?
Niemand wil tog in die ghetto agterbly.

Ek is bevry.
Ja, dit kan ek nie bestry.
Wat word nou van oom Daan,
my liewe tante Saan,
moet hulle maar in armoede vergaan?

Beskawing is ongasvry,
ongenadig,
ja, so wreed.
Oom Daan, tante Saan –
ek sal veg vir julle om 'n beter voortbestaan.

PART II
The voices of Reiger Park

11

Albert Louis Johanneson
The life story of Dukathole's football legend

Cecil H Morden

Albert Johanneson showed exceptional athletic talent as a youngster and was only later introduced to football. Born on 13 March 1940 and raised on the dusty streets of the Germiston location, Dukathole, Taaitjie as he was known then, not only became hooked on the game, he excelled on the pitch.

Johanneson's introduction to football was coincidental. One day while he was practising his athletic skills, a coach from a local soccer team approached him to stand in for a missing player. With no boots, he played bare-footed. He set up one goal, scored another and left the pitch in the arms of his teammates. Athletics was history and football became his passion. From the local team, he moved on to play for the Germiston Coloured School team and later joined the Germiston Caledonian Society Amateur Football Club.[1]

In his late teens Johanneson was selected for the Coloured XI in the annual national football competition of the South African Soccer Federation, an organisation for South Africans of colour, i.e., Black, Coloured and Indian players. The first Kajee Cup tournament, named after a Natal Indian Congress politician, AI Kajee, took place in 1952. The other two competing teams were a Black XI and an Indian XI. Basil D'Oliveira, better known for his cricket exploits as an international English batsman, participated in the 1956 edition of the soccer tournament as a member of the Coloured XI.[2]

In the 1950s, English soccer clubs recruited several South African players. Players such as Bill Perry for Blackpool, Eddie Firmani and John Hewie for Charlton, and several others, established themselves in the English Football League. Apart from hailing from South Africa, they had something else in common; they were all White. Charlton manager Jimmy Seed recruited over thirteen White players from South Africa during that decade.

Barney Gaffney, a teacher at a school in Johannesburg, scouted Johanneson. When Jack Taylor, Leeds United's manager, received Gaffney's glowing report recommending a young winger, he was more than ready to offer this prospect a trial.

Gaffney taught woodwork at Coronationville High School until his retirement. He was elected as the 2nd chairperson of the Bosmont Football Association (BFA) in 1966 and served as chairperson of the BFA for over 40 years. Isaac de Jongh, the chairman of Bosmont Football Association in 2018, said he learned integrity and honesty from Gaffney. According to De Jongh: "Another thing that Mr Gaffney stands for is non-racialism because at the time the BFA was the only association that played with Blacks and Indians; there is no race, we need to respect each other. I've learned a lot from him."[3]

Leeds United, 1961 to 1969

Johanneson arrived at Elland Road stadium in Leeds in January 1961. During his first year he lodged with fellow South African Gerry Francis, the first black footballer at Leeds United. They shared a room at 13 Noster Hill, Beeston, the football club house, a short walk from the stadium.[4] Mr and Mrs Wineley were tasked with their care. Thanks to Mrs Wineley, Albert became an avid tea drinker! Not far from the club house used to be a Catholic Church, St. Mary's, where he was made feel welcome and where he regularly went to pray.

Johanneson was offered a contract after a three-month trial period. Unbeknown to him, first division teams Wolverhampton Wanderers and Fulham were also monitoring him closely. When he arrived at Leeds, Jack Taylor was the manager, but he was soon replaced by Don Revie who was initially not favourably disposed towards him. Yet he became Revie's first signing for Leeds, albeit only at the persuasion of Les Cocker, the trainer of the first team.[5] He roughly earned £15 a week**.** His appearance in April 1961 was to be for the first team against Scunthorpe at Elland Road. However, the match was called off due to snow but he made his debut against Swansea City a few days later. Later that month, both he and Francis played for Leeds against Stokes, becoming the first two players of colour to appear together in an English league match.

Johanneson's first full season for Leeds was in 1961-62. He played an instrumental part in helping the team avoid relegation to the Second Division. Thanks to his brilliant display in a vital away game at Newcastle, Leeds gained the necessary points in a 3-0 victory. His dazzling displays on the wing were starting to attract the attention of the Elland Road faithful. After one particularly impressive performance against Chelsea, in which he scored twice, most of the crowd stayed behind to cheer Johanneson off the pitch. Following his first season, Johanneson visited South Africa, staying with his paternal aunt, Mrs Violet Fortuin, in Reiger Park. Mohamed Shaikh in his contribution to this book remembers how in the early 1970s the football star demonstrated intricate football tricks to the youngsters in the street. Yet, Johanneson did not share with his family or friends the racial abuse he suffered at the hands of opposing football players and supporters.

Leeds was promoted to the Premier League at the end of the 1963-64 season with Johanneson the first league's leading scorer with 15 goals in 41 games, over a fifth of the total scored by his club that season.[6] The crowd took him to their hearts and often raved, "He is better than Eusébio", the Portuguese forward nicknamed the "Black Panther", who was soon to light up the 1966 World Cup, held in England, as the tournament's top goal scorer.[7] Johanneson was quick, and the Leeds faithful nicknamed him "The Black Flash", a moniker memorialised in Paul Harrison's biography, *The Black Flash: The Albert Johanneson Story*.[8]

The 1964-65 season gave Johanneson the opportunity to test himself against the best of English football. Leeds ended up second on the log, losing out on goal difference to Manchester United. They reached the FA Cup final, for the first time, only to lose out to Liverpool in extra time.[9]

For Johanneson what should have been a crowning occasion turned into a nightmare. He was a trailblazer for a generation, the first Black footballer ever to feature in a Cup final at Wembley. Prior to the kick-off, the eyes of the football world were on the Leeds winger. However, he suffered from chronic bouts of loss of self-confidence and the pressure seemed unbearable.[10]

Ian McCourt reported that Johanneson was not feeling well and he was apprehensive,

> […] he wanted to be back in the dressing room, away from the (racial) abuse. His confidence is drained; his body is shaking. He spends much of the time before the game in the toilet vomiting and suffering from diarrhoea. He asks Don Revie if he can be dropped. The Leeds manager refuses. Waiting to go out on to the turf, he is approached by someone who says: "You've got no chance looking like you do. Our fans will murder you."[11]

At the biggest moment in his career he was a nervous wreck. The racial abuse started well before match day and continued at the game. "When we walked out," Johanneson told Harrison, "all I could hear was a cacophony of Zulu-like noises coming from the terraces. It was dreadful, I could barely hear myself think for those screams. I wanted to run back down the tunnel."[12]

According to McCourt, Revie advised his winger to use his pace to "run like the wind and don't let the jungle bunny chanting get to you." Johanneson was chopped down early in the game and hit with a few sly punches. He disappeared from view and in the words of teammate Johnny Giles "did not contribute. "He had a very, very bad match," Giles added. Revie approached Johanneson after the game and said: "Albert, you let yourself and your family down today, you went hiding."[13]

The football legend and trailblazer

Johanneson was the first Black footballer to play in a Football Association (FA) Cup final, and the first to play for an English league side in the final of a major European Cup competition, the Inter-Cities Fairs Cup. As a winger, he scored 48 goals for Leeds in 172 appearances.

A screenshot of the competing teams, Leeds and Liverpool, in the FA Cup final of 1965.

To the generation of British-born Black players who broke through into the English league in the 1980s, Johanneson was an icon. Phil Vasili, when researching his book *Crossing over the White Line,* was impressed by the number of players who said Johanneson was the footballer they most admired. They remembered him for his array of skills and most importantly because "they were showcased along the Shaftesbury Avenue of football, the First Division."[14] Brian Deane noted: "As young, football-crazy lads growing up in Chapeltown, Leeds, in the early 1970s, Albert Johanneson was a name we were all familiar with. He had been an inspiration for the next generation of footballing talent in the city."[15] Paul Eubank, who has worked to preserve Johanneson's memory, recalled: "My dad used to take me to Elland Road in the 1960s where I saw Albert play and I never saw someone with such skill before. When I was playing football as a kid in the streets, I never wanted to be Bobby Charlton or George Best or Denis Law, I always wanted to be Albert."[16]

Paul McParlan remarked that Johanneson "was an incredibly gifted and skilful footballer."[17] Billy Bremner said, "When Albert joined Leeds the rest of the team stood open-mouthed, drooling over his trickery. He was a bloody excellent player and had so much pace and strength, he was a great athlete."[18] While the other players at Leeds were aware that Johanneson liked singing and humming, they might not have known that dancing was another of his passions. He explained to his biographer the similarities between dancing and soccer: "it was very much part of how I saw my football skills, like a dancer gliding past challenges, turning, twisting, fast then slow, calm then erratic."[19] It came as no surprise that he bought a transistor radio with his first money from Leeds, so that he could listen to music and dance all by himself in the privacy of his room.

The trauma of apartheid South Africa

Johanneson grew up in Dukathole, during the 1940s and 1950s, a time when a slew of new laws encoded and reinforced racial discrimination. People of colour's dignity and human rights were being violated with no regard to the long-lasting damage it would cause to those individuals and the country at large. McCourt reports on one experience Johanneson remembered from his childhood:

> One day, aged no more than six, he was playing with his friends on a street corner. A car stopped near him and a white boy of the same age leaned out and spat in Johanneson's face. Johanneson did not move. The boy giggled and did it again. Then the driver of the car reached out and whipped Johanneson across his neck with a cane. His friends ran when the man got out of his car. Johanneson could not. He was on the ground in pain. The man kicked him and drove off. Understandably scarred by incidents like this, Johanneson was of a nervous disposition. He was the retiring type, far more bashful than boisterous.[20]

This event and other forms of discrimination that he had to endure, in England as well, probably contributed to his apparent lack of self-confidence, despite his extraordinary skills, and to what McCourt refers to as him being "a man forever uncertain of his place."[21]

Racial prejudice in England

Although he was initially well received, Johanneson experienced a level of racial prejudice from sectors of the British population that he found unnerving and deeply unsettling. Johanneson found Britain in the 1960s to be a deeply prejudiced country where institutional racism was firmly ingrained. Johanneson said in 1962: "I felt I would never get used to this new life. Many times I wished I had stayed at home." He was also arguably the first player to be subjected to orchestrated racism from the terraces. He was regularly booed, jeered and subjected to monkey and Zulu-sounding chants at away grounds, while also facing abuse and intimidation from opposing players.[22]

In his debut against Swansea, three days after signing his contract, he was already subjected to racial abuse. He first heard the abuse coming from the opposition's dressing room and then from the stands. The fans made monkey noises and jumped up and down. Johanneson didn't score but he did make a mockery of the fullbacks, using his quick feet and deft touch to leave them stuck in the mud and looking foolish after they had rushed in to try to rattle him.[23] On the field with Leeds United, Jack Charlton and Billy Bremner took it upon themselves to become the winger's minders. Bremner in particular defended Albert against the racist actions of opposition players, fans and club officials.

George Best remarked: "Albert was quite a brave man to actually go on the pitch in the first place, wasn't he? And he went out and did it. He had a lot of skill. A nice man as well … which is, I suppose, the more important thing, isn't it? More important than anything."[24]

Johanneson's confidence was sometimes undermined by his opponents' insults. He once complained that an Everton player called him a "Black bastard". The extent of the racism that he had to endure is amplified by a post on the Leeds United website, of a club supporter no less: "My memories are of a streak of black lightning flying around the pitch at Elland Road in the 60s … we Leeds fans threw him bananas from the Shed, but we didn't KNOW it was racist back then, as Blacks were far and few between – and even less in football. We thought he liked them, in our ignorance. He would duly pick them up and bring them to the dugout."[25]

In a review of *The Black Flash: The Albert Johanneson Story*, one reader commented: "the racial torment he [Johanneson] endured really needed to be documented. I therefore applaud Paul Harrison for doing just this in his well-researched book."[26] Norman Hunter said: "He was braver than many people gave him credit for and had the scars on his legs to prove it."[27] McParlan noted that he "had to overcome many hurdles to succeed in the English professional game."[28]

Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD), a youth and social inclusion project and charity based in Sheffield, England, that works to combat racism and increase understanding between different communities, combined forces with the District Six Museum in 2010 to document the history of South African football players of colour who played in Britain. This was done through the *Offside* exhibition during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. The exhibition set the players' stories against the changing social and political situation in both countries, particularly in relation to their attitudes towards race. The opening of the exhibition coincided with the football World Cup held in South Africa in June that year and remained on show at the District Six Museum for a year. It looked at racism and other discrimination in football, highlighting the fact that racism remains an issue.

A report written by FURD's Ruth Johnson and Howard Holmes and football historian Phil Vasili uncovered many fascinating and shocking stories.[29] In 2015 FURD joined forces with illustrator Archie Birch from Cape Town to publish a 24-page comic book telling Johanneson's inspirational, yet sadly poignant, story. The comic book launch was held in March 2016 at the District Six Museum. Following the launch in Cape Town, the comic was also launched in Johannesburg on 27 April 2016. Barney Gaffney, the teacher/scout who recommended Albert "Hurry Hurry", as he was nicknamed locally, to Leeds United in 1960, attended the launch of the comic in Johannesburg. Gaffney was joined by contemporaries who played alongside Johanneson in the late 1950s.[30]

Downward spiral and a tragic end

The 1964-65 season was to be the pinnacle of Johanneson's achievements at Leeds United. After that he suffered from a variety of injuries from which he never fully recovered, and the searing pace and acceleration that had been his main assets started to decline.[31] These injuries and the introduction of Eddie Gray left Johanneson on the sidelines, and he made only ten further starts for Leeds before manager Revie released him in 1970.[32]

The following sequence of events during one match, as reported by McCourt, sounds unreal:

> Hours before a game against Burnley FC, Johanneson had been drinking heavily. At one point in that match, the footage shows Johanneson lying on the turf in the opposition box. The play goes on around him. From his prone position, he watches as Gray picks up the ball wide on the left and dances his way through the Burnley defence before scoring one of the most memorable goals in Leeds' history. Johanneson remembers looking at Gray and realising that at that very moment his career at Elland Road was over. He was right. He would never play for Leeds again.[33]

When he was released by Leeds at the end of the 1969-70 season, Revie reportedly told him: "You are finished here, you're washed up, look at you. I've got plans and you don't figure in them."[34] Johanneson, just like his friend Francis a few years earlier, moved to York City (fourth division) at the start of the 1970-71 season and made an immediate impact in a team that was promoted to Division Three. In 1972, at the young age of 32, after more than a decade in English football, it was all over as injury forced Johanneson to retire. Overweight and drink dependent, he was let go by the club. Desperate to sort himself out, he returned to South Africa and signed up with Glenville FC for a season before returning to England. He did menial jobs in Chinese restaurants to get some income. Without football as his focus, he spiralled into decline, an experience not totally unfamiliar to several high-profile footballers of that era. With no purpose and time on his hands, Johanneson turned to drink to cope.[35] Johanneson admitted to his biographer: "Gradually, I lost control of who I was, other people were making decisions for me, unscrupulous people abused my good name and I was associating with the wrong kind of person … at one time I was stumbling from one crisis to another, I felt alone and without any source of comfort other than that found in alcohol."[36] McParlan commented: "Albert deserves our empathy and understanding for the combination of circumstances that left him destitute and alone towards the end of his life."[37] There are also suggestions that he suffered from depression: "Depression harmed his footballing career and alcohol killed it."[38]

Personal life

Johanneson married Norma Comrie in 1963, a pharmacist originally from Jamaica. They had two children, Yvonne (b. 1963) and Alicia (b. 1966). The couple's marriage lasted eleven years, ending in divorce.[39] After losing his football contract, he became a heavy drinker. Norma could not cope with his descent into alcoholism, and she and their daughters emigrated to the United States in the 1970s.[40]

In 1993, with the intervention of non-footballing sources, Johanneson attended the Chaucer Clinic for addicts in Southall, West London. His condition was so serious that he would have died if he continued drinking. He was on the road to recovery when he was invited to a fundraising event in Leeds. The staff could not prevent him from attending. It took one drink to undo all their hard work. Ridden by guilt, he never again returned to the clinic.[41] He ended up in a squalid flat. Johanneson retired from football aged 32, and died on 28 September 1995, aged only 55, a year and five months after the first democratic elections in South Africa. His body lay undiscovered for a week in his flat in Gledhow Towers, North Leeds.[42]

Johanneson's headstone is inscribed with the words "I rise, I rise", from a poem by Maya Angelou, which his daughters chose because they felt it showed "from whence our father came and what he achieved in his short footballing career." The lines from the poem are an appropriate tribute to a man who escaped the apartheid regime in South Africa to become an inspirational figure in the fight against institutional racism in football and was a trailblazer for the first generation of British-born Black footballers, indeed "one of the greatest footballers who ever played for Leeds United."[43]

Honours

Johanneson is hailed by many as having paved the way for scores of Black players that make up the ranks of the English Premiership, especially those with South African roots. In January 2019 Leeds United unveiled a plaque in memory of Albert Johanneson. His granddaughter unveiled the plaque at Elland Road. At this occasion Leeds United's CEO Angus Kinnear said: "Albert is a massive part of the history of Leeds United Football Club. He

Albert with Norma and their firstborn, Yvonne (Johanneson family collection).

was a trailblazer and paved the way for other Black players to make their mark on the sport." The leader of the Leeds City council, Judith Blake, added: "We should feel extremely proud that Albert wore the famous jersey of Leeds United and for his part in the club's rise under the great Don Revie."[44]

In November 2020 Leeds United honoured two South African football legends and Leeds United players, Lucas Radebe, the former Bafana Bafana captain, and Albert Louis Johanneson, the Germiston-born winger, alongside current captain Kalvin Phillips in the Leeds city centre. This was done by way of an impressive mural to celebrate Leeds United's new partnership with Roc Nation, an entertainment agency founded by the rapper Jay-Z.[45]

12

George du Plessis
Teenage activist, non-conformist, essayist

Cecil H Morden & Marilyn Morden

Teenage activist, non-conformist, essayist; these are a few ways to describe George Kenrick du Plessis, born on 21 August 1935. His family resided at 94 Second Street in Benoni Location, where he was born as one of seven siblings, three brothers and four sisters. His father John was a shoemaker and his mother, Euphemia, known as Minnie, was a nurse. With their income they initially managed to feed and clothe their children and keep them at school but all this changed when his paternal grandfather died. His grandfather worked on the West Springs Mine and several family members lived with him. Following his death they had to vacate the mine accommodation. All these relatives moved into 94 Second Street. Suddenly there were 19 people living under one roof with only three breadwinners. Hunger became part of their daily experience.[1]

George was nine years old, and their dire home situation caused his schoolwork to suffer. Dropping out of the Benoni Coloured Primary school was not desirable since his parents set their hopes on him becoming a priest in the Anglican Church. Although he and all his siblings attended high school, five of them dropped out at various stages. Only George and his sister Pearl went as far as matric but he gave up after failing three times. She went on to Holy Rosary Convent in Cradock, became a teacher and taught at William Hills High School for several years.

In 1948 the National Party came to power, enacting almost immediately a plethora of laws that would forever change the lives of South Africans. Among these laws were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Group Areas Act (1950), and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953).

In Benoni Location, Du Plessis was not yet aware of the beast called politics. He was to be introduced to it in 1950 at the age of fifteen by Mrs Mary Moodley. Aunty Mary was a trade union organiser, well known for her struggle for justice and equality for all. She led by example, working relentlessly to alleviate the suffering of the poverty-stricken and

George du Plessis, Albert Links and Danny Cassell (Links collection).

the rejected. She was detained during the state of emergency in 1960. In 1963 she was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. The ban, which restricted her to Benoni, was continuously renewed until 1977. She was confined to the immediate district until her death at age 66 in 1979.[2]

In 1950 she organised a May Day march, and requested pupils from different schools to participate in the celebrations. Du Plessis' high school principal, as well as the principal of the primary school, allowed their pupils to join the march. It was a different story at the Roman Catholic School. There the priest refused Aunty Mary's request, and rather set dogs on the marchers. The priest's indifference and his violent reaction would forever be etched in the young George's mind. Only later, through his personal experience of Father Trevor Huddleston and the local Catholic parish priest, Father Stan Brennan, would he learn that not all clergymen are indifferent to the plight of the souls placed under their care. The earlier experience drew him to politics and a passion that was to last a lifetime.

Through Aunty Mary, Du Plessis became involved in the selling of left wing newspapers, *The Guardian, New Age* and *Contact*. At her house he was introduced to political figures like Walter Sisulu and JB Marks. She invited speakers from far and near, discussing various topics, such as socialism and the Russian education system. With the law offices of OR Tambo and Nelson Mandela next to the clinic, George's mother became well acquainted with Tambo who became a regular house visitor. Du Plessis' growing political awareness culminated in his presence at Kliptown in June 1955 when the Freedom Charter was adopted. He was about to turn 20.

Years later, in an interview on 18 December 2019, Oom Georgie nostalgically recalled life in Benoni Location where all races – Black, Coloured, Indian, Chinese and White people –

lived together in harmony. No one cared about the skin colour of friends or neighbours. They spoke each other's languages. Relationships across the colour bar were not unusual. He had many Black friends and his first girlfriend was Black. He dated a Hindu woman, and at another time, a woman from a wealthy Muslim family, whom he thought he would marry. Her mother even told him that as her son-in-law he would become the owner of one of their vegetable shops instead of working for £20 a month! That was not to be. His priorities changed when he met Florence from Port Elizabeth. At the time, he worked at the Department of Labour where one's salary doubled when one got married.

The young couple tied the knot four months after they met. On the wedding day, the magistrate refused to marry them as Florence was only twenty years old and required parental permission. The bridegroom-to-be walked into the court yard where he found two older acquaintances, Martin du Preez and Mrs Fernholdt, who were willing to sign the register as the guardians of Florence. Although he did not tell any relatives about their wedding plans, by the time they arrived home everybody already knew because the "guardians" duly informed them! And so began 55 years of wedded life, until Florence passed away in 2013.

As a six-year-old George received a box of toys from the Anglican Church. He kept only one toy for himself and gave the rest away, a precursor of a trait that would mark his sense of community responsibility and sharing in later life. While working at the Department of Labour he quietly did his bit to make life easier for his Black compatriots, who were particularly affected by the government's divide and rule laws. Du Plessis remembered some of the ways in which they were treated differently. Their wages were meagre, disability grants and food programmes at Black schools were stopped. Whenever he could, he assisted them in changing their race classification status to "Coloured", easing their employment prospects. "Government dehumanize[d] us and refer[red] to people as 'vomit'", he recalled. The deep resentment also influenced his view of White people in general, even though he readily admitted that while working with White colleagues, he "saw" their hearts and realised that among them were "good people." He credited Mahomed Navsa, who in post-1994 South Africa rose to the position of a judge, in helping him to work through his negative feelings.[3]

With their foundational apartheid provisions in place, the National Party government started enforcing its draconian laws. Across the country South Africans of colour were uprooted. Benoni Location was no exemption. Its Coloured inhabitants were to move to Reiger Park. Some people moved, while others resisted. A handful of objectors took a principled stand and refused to move. They were to pay the price for their resistance. The fate of three residents in particular still haunted Du Plessis years later: a lawyer, who allegedly had been assassinated although his death was camouflaged as a robbery; a man, who was killed in an apparent hit-and-run accident; and the principal of William Hills High School, who lost his teaching job. He was particularly touched by the fate of the latter, his namesake George Carr, who was forced out of teaching, and left to work as a journalist at *The Daily Mail*. Still, this was not enough and the security police continued to harass him, even threatening to close down the newspaper. Mr Carr eventually emigrated to England, where he lived to his dying days.

Around 1963 Du Plessis finally succumbed and moved to Reiger Park. By that time his mother and brothers had already moved; his father passed away before the move. At the time of their move Reiger Park bore no resemblance to a cohesive community. People arrived from various places: Benoni, Germiston, Modderbee and State Mines. Jostling and fighting for houses happened quite

NOVEMBER 1989 THE BEAM

AUNT MARY'S SPIRIT LIVES ON

By: LEONARD LUTCHMAN

ACTONVILLE: Last month marked the 10th Anniversary of the death of Human Rights Campaigner, Mrs. Mary Moodley, from the Benoni who struggled for equality and justice for all.

"Aunt Mary" as she was popularly known was born at New Modder Mines on 14 March 1914. She was a dedicated woman of deep compassion and warm personality and lived in the old Benoni "Etwatwa" Township amid squalor, where she offered her help and guidance. She worked relentlesly to offer a little hope, warmth and sunshine into the lives of the suffering, the poverty stricken the rejected.

She was a solid supporter of the congress, Trade Union Movement and active in the Women's Federation and numerous local communities. "Aunty Mary" was a trade union organiser and together with her daughter was arrested in 1960 for helping political refugees to escape from the country. She was banned until her death in October 1979.

Aunt Mary was sent to prison and placed into Solitary Confinement, on her release there were ecstatic welcoming scenes children and mothers and fathers were dancing in the streets, shouting, "Aunty Mary's Back".

Still living in Actonville, Benoni are her 2 sons, 2 daughters and 19 grandchildren. In exile are her 2 daughters, Joyce Mohammed and Cynthia Moodley. One of her sons who left South Africa in the 60's, Vernon Moodley, died in exile, he was unmarried.

Mrs. Mary Moodley

Remembering a struggle stalwart: Mary Moodley (*The Beam*, November 1985).

often, and, according to him, these actions marked the beginning of gangster activity in the area.

Du Plessis saw a need for sports in this disparate community. He and Henry Adolph approached Gerry Oberholzer, the White superintendent of the area at the time, for the establishment of a community sports club. Mr Oberholzer suggested *jukskei*, a sporting code unfamiliar to the community and closely associated with Afrikaner *volkspele*, i.e., tribal games. Needless to say, they respectfully declined. They started a table tennis and darts club instead, for which no special venue was needed, and through which they managed to keep some roaming youngsters off the streets.

Later, Du Plessis, who worked as an insurance broker, found that these activities ate into his limited free time, and he withdrew from it. It was about the time that he fell into the trap of excessive drinking with friends, to the point of virtually losing everything of value. Gradually though, he realised that he was following in his father's footsteps, whose drinking was the cause of some serious health problems. He confronted his weakness, chose sobriety, and in the process lost several "friends", but he felt rewarded in regaining his self-respect.

The fire that was kindled at the May Day march in 1950 could not be extinguished. Du Plessis would become involved in various aspects of life – not only in Reiger Park, but also outside the township as well. He became committed to causes that sought the upliftment of others. Looking back, Oom Georgie, the octogenarian, thought he wore "too many hats". One such hat was his involvement in the St Joseph's Home for orphaned Coloured children in Johannesburg, run by Anglican nuns. He was an active committee member from 1967 to 1979, starting as the secretary. The Home was under threat of closure by the National Party government. As an act of protest against apartheid, the nuns left

in 1978, and lay teachers took over. For years the committee continue to fight to keep the place open as a sanctuary for vulnerable kids. Yet, sadly, after 1994 the new government closed down the Home.

With preexisting political representation for people of colour closed down on all fronts, and only the government's new race-based institutions available, Du Plessis took the bold step of joining the Labour Party of South Africa. Dr Richard van der Ross and others set up the party to participate in the 1969 elections of the newly established Coloured Persons Representative Council. Although others elsewhere threatened with boycotts, still others expressed doubt, George was convinced initially that participating in the institution was the right thing to do, even though it did not meet his measure of political inclusion, namely the principles of the Freedom Charter. He was elected as secretary of the local branch, but never expressed interest in serving on any government structure. He soon realised that his choice was flawed and that he could not identify with the race exclusivity of the Labour Party or the system in which it participated. He subsequently resigned.

Apart from the prominent political figures such as Sisulu, Marks and Tambo, Du Plessis met and was associated with several well-known anti-apartheid figures. A few more are worth mentioning. Dennis Brutus, a poet and anti-apartheid activist, while on the run from the security police, stayed over for four days in his house in Benoni, with Du Plessis acting as his chauffeur and later, dropping him off at a clandestine meeting point, where a second driver took over. The same was true for the Cape trade unionist, Reggie September, a leader of the Congress-aligned, SA Coloured People's Congress. Du Plessis became involved in the Human Rights Committee in the early 1970s with among others, Ahmed Timol and Sheila Weinberg. Timol (29) was a member of the underground Communist Party and died at the hands of the security police in 1971. Through the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s Du Plessis became a colleague of the organisation's leaders such as Trevor Manuel and Mosiuoa Lekota.

His courage to act whenever the circumstances demanded it, was never lacking. It is no surprise that Du Plessis even tried his hand at journalism, freelancing for more than one newspaper. Starting in 1974, until 1986, he wrote articles for *The Star, Rand Daily Mail, New Nation* and *Speak.* When *The Beam* was established with Jerry Theys, it became the vehicle for his monthly column, "Social Justice," addressing topical social issues such as poverty and homelessness.

Through his various activities he found time to assist in building local civic organisations. In 1977 the Reiger Park Tenants and Ratepayers Association was established, with Du Plessis as a founding member. From the outset, this body was at odds with the government supporting Coloured Management Committee. As treasurer of the Reiger Park Society for the Care of the Aged, Du Plessis remembered that he had to develop a thick skin. Even though they provided a service for the needy, the team endured negative comments from detractors but they persevered. In the early 1980s Du Plessis assisted with the founding of an Advice Centre on the East Rand.

One serious issue in Reiger Park was (and still is) the lack of housing, even leading to unrest. Government spokespeople blamed one such riotous event at the beginning of May 1981 (see Chapter 7) on racial friction between Coloureds and Indians, while in fact, according to Du Plessis, it was the result of the acute housing shortage and friction within the taxi industry. For him the riots were a "historical aberration". He was arrested and charged with arson, although the charges were dropped later. Years later, during the interview on which this account is based, Du Plessis could still remember in vivid detail the run-up to the riots, and the rioting. For years, he suffered physically and emotionally from the trauma of those events.

In January 1983 the feasibility of a united political

body was discussed. On the East Rand Du Plessis played a role in laying the foundation for the UDF. At the official launch in Cape Town he was elected as the national vice-president. In this capacity he travelled widely, both internally and outside the country. In 1985, he was listed as a co-conspirator in the Delmas Treason Trial but was never formally charged. When the Conservative Party won the local elections in Boksburg and re-introduced petty apartheid laws, Du Plessis again stepped up to lead a protest. He served on the executive committee of the Save Boksburg Committee (SBC) that was driving the hugely successful "White Christmas" boycott campaign of 1988 (see Chapter 7).

Throughout his years of community involvement Du Plessis never approved of the use of violence. Sometimes it meant that his was a lone voice. He remembered a time when during the violent school boycotts of the 1980s detective Abraham Morden sought his help in talking to pupils, dissuading them from violent action. He felt that freedom was imminent and his message to the youth was that they had to equip themselves to run a liberated country. In his personal life he strove for a non-racial, hate-free society where everyone was recognised as equals.

In July 2012 Du Plessis spoke at the memorial service of Father Brennan, the stalwart of the Catholic Church in Reiger Park, who left an indelible mark on him and showed him the better angels of our nature. For him, the priest was an enduring example of what could be done against the odds. Likewise, it was Oom Georgie's desire to do his community work with the heart and disposition of Jesus. He was driven by his Christian beliefs, and never desired position or recognition.

George Kenrick du Plessis, aged 84, passed away on 18 July 2020.

Based on George du Plessis's written input and an interview with Cecil H Morden and Marilyn Morden, 18 December 2019.

13

My 'reluctant' journey from Benoni to Canada: Extracts from 'A Long letter'

Tienie du Preez

The one big regret I have is that I had left my native land. To me, as I grew up, I was being made to feel less 'at home' after each negative encounter with the authorities.[1]

Looking back after 42 years in Canada (1965 to 2007)

What I am attempting to do is to 'mentally' revisit the places, the events and, especially the many people whose lives and teaching and beliefs, whose customs and superstitions all were part of the influences and effects that moulded and sculpted my life and me.

In late October 1928 Peter du Preez and Katrina Johanna (Katie) du Preez (née Jansen) had their first child. I was born in Newclare, 139 Pollack Avenue, next to Charlie's shop. At the age of 18 months I was 'given' to my grandparents. A Du Preez 'tradition' is that the eldest grandchild be raised by the grandparents. The home next to the Congregational Church, 69 Second Street, Benoni Location, Coloured Section, was where my grandparents (grandfather Marthinus du Preez and grandmother, née Smith) lived. I lived with my grandmother there from 1930, when I was 18 months old, to 1951 when my grandmother passed away. At the time I was 23 years old and she was 86. My grandmother was one of the strongest influences on my character and on my life. Although I had three brothers, Joe, Vincent and Ken, and a sister, Mabs, I was virtually 'an only child', having been brought up by my grandparents.

After my grandmother's death I moved to my parents in Protea, 15 miles south from Johannesburg, and stayed there for five years. During this period, I continued to teach at the Benoni Indian Elementary School. I had to travel 20 miles east by train from Johannesburg. About six months into 1956 I was seconded from Benoni Indian School to William Hills High School across the road from where I lived. At the time Mr Alec Jansen was the principal.

The Du Preezs

The Du Preezs hailed from Alice, Katrivier,

Marthinus and Beryl du Preez
(Du Preez collection).

Riversdale and other small villages in the Eastern Cape. My grandfather and grandmother settled in Doornfontein, a suburb of Johannesburg, for a number of years before moving to Benoni. All except one of Grandpa's brothers eventually settled in Benoni. At one point my Oupa was expected to wear a badge on his arm and display a *blikpas*, metal pass.

My Oom David had three sons: Jonny, Charles and Connie, and three daughters: Katie, Irene and Phyllis. Auntie Irene was married to Martin Ehrenreich from Paarl and Aunt Phyllis was married to Sam Fransch. My father, Peter du Preez, was married to Katie Jansen; they had five children: Marthinus (me); Kenneth; the twins, Joseph and Mabel; and the youngest, Vincent. The Du Preez family was well known for their musical and tennis talents. Many members of my family sang in the church choir and I played amateur tennis.

I married Beryl Dunn in 1957, a woman as honest and as stubborn in her beliefs as her father was. But under the stubborn exterior was a loving, caring person. We had three children: Cathy, a social worker; Melvin, a teacher in the Cape; and Eric the youngest who, although he is qualified as an English second language teacher, has not continued in that field.

The Jansens

I don't know when Ouma Jansen (née Theron), my mother's mother, came from the Cape to Transvaal. When I first knew her she lived in Newclare close to the railway station, long before there was a Westbury Station and many more years before there was a Bosmont. At the time Newclare was probably the most cosmopolitan of the 'Coloured' areas, and Coloured, Indian, Black and Chinese people all lived peacefully together. My mom, Katie du Preez, was the eldest of the Jansen sisters. They lived on Croesus Avenue in Newclare. As mentioned, I lived in Benoni, having been 'given' to my paternal grandparents. I did see my parents regularly though, spending most of the school vacations with them. Joelina, who was raised by her Ouma Jansen,

and her husband, Barry Clarke, bought a house in Actonville; they offered us two rooms in their house when we got married.

The Smiths

Two of the three Smith brothers lived in the Transvaal; the third one, Oom Tom, lived in Laingsburg. Uncle C Smith lived in Benoni. As a child I always thought his name was 'Seasmith'. My paternal grandmother, his sister, had described him as a 'penny pincher'. Uncle Zachariah lived in Johannesburg. All I remember about him are the long soporific prayers he said in church that made you feel very sleepy. Uncle 'Z' stuttered. My grandmother raised her sister Maria, as their parents died when Maria was still very young. Auntie Maria lived in the Cape where she was married to Isaac Klein. Auntie Maria had two sons and a daughter, Kathleen. Kathleen's daughter, Belona, had a daughter who later moved to Nigel, Transvaal. Uncle C Smith had three sons: Peter, Willy and Fred, and two daughters, Sophie and Bertha. All three brothers were teachers. Uncle Peter was the acting principal for a while when I was in Sub B. He was married to Auntie Mary, a teacher.

Schooling, teacher training and early teaching years

Up to the early 1950s there was only one school, Sub A to Standard 6, for Coloured and Indian children in the Old Benoni Location. So when I did matric, i.e., Standards 9 and 10, I had to travel the twenty odd miles to Vrededorp, near Mayfair in Johannesburg. This was the only high school for Coloureds in the entire Transvaal province. The teachers training centre, called Eurafrican Training Centre (ETC), was in the same building under the same principal, AM Visser.

After passing the National Matric Certificate I got a job in Tooronga Boot Factory. I soon left this job for another, at a White herbalist, writing names and addresses from the White voters' roll on envelopes and stuffing advertisements in them. Because of World War II there was a shortage of teachers and I was offered a temporary position, teaching Standard 5 at the Stirtonville Coloured School. Mr Le Pere was the principal. Here I taught from late July 1945 until mid-December 1945. A 'war allowance' paid to teachers during the time augmented my salary. In January 1946 I returned to the Eurafrican Training Centre to enrol for the Transvaal Teachers Lower Diploma. A loan of £100 my grandfather secured from Mr Jonas Ontong helped pay for my studies. The loan was duly repaid within eight months after my graduation.

Ally Hassen, a very dear friend of mine, encouraged me to enrol with the University of South Africa (Unisa) to study for a BA. But when my first assignment in the Afrikaans course ('theory' of the origin of Afrikaans) was returned with a remark: 'As jy so dink, staan jy alleen', I wrote back and thanked him for the compliment. Then youthful stupidity took over. I quit. I subsequently enlisted to do the Transvaal Teachers Diploma. The White students did the course full-time, in one year. But because the Coloured and Indian teachers were only 'allowed' to do the course part-time, we had to do it over two years.

In my final year (second year) there were ten male students: Simon O'Connor, Herbie Rhoda, Vincent Braam and Stanley Barnes (all four from the Cape Province), Donny Fick, Monty Hoskins, Victor Swartz, Pat Henry, Ray Poonan and I (the six of us from the Transvaal). Steve Farrah and Rathinasamy were two of the students who completed their diplomas the previous year and set the standard. Miss Greenlees was our English lecturer. Donny Fick became a national tennis champion. I was the only one in the group to pass both Afrikaans and English with distinction.

After I received my diploma, I registered with Unisa again. Another learning adventure I had was to attend the compulsory 'vacation school' where we would have in-person classes with professors and

lecturers for three weeks. The Coloured, Black and Indian students were housed in student 'barracks' in Kilnerton. By the end of 1964 I had completed about three-quarters of my degree, but we decided to emigrate in 1965 before I could finish it. I did my BA, honours, and master's at Toronto University in the 1970s. I must say the foundation laid by some Unisa courses did make a positive difference, especially one by Prof Edward Davis, head of the English Department.

My first teaching post, as a qualified teacher, was in Benoni, where I grew up, where I schooled and where 'everybody knew me'. At the Junior school, which subsequently became the Elementary School, there were two temporary principals in quick succession: Mr James Alexander and Mr Alec Jansen, respectively. However, Mr Dick Bartiss from Kimberley was appointed as principal in a permanent capacity. Mr Alec Jansen was my ex-teacher and my mother's brother.

When the Indian community asked for their own school (around 1953), Mr Alec Jansen was asked to open the Indian school. At the time there was not a single person in the Benoni Indian community that had become a teacher! The whole staff was Coloured: Mr and Mrs Van der Haer, Mr Bob Triegaardt, Mr Bill Gordon, Mr Cecil du Preez, Ms Joelina Jansen and me.

William Hills High School was the only high school in the Transvaal that had been 'started' by Coloureds, had only Coloured and Indian teachers, and never had a White principal. Later Mr Alec Jansen returned to William Hills High, this time as acting principal because his brother, Mr Martin Jansen, was appointed as principal at Newtown Coloured School in Johannesburg. Mr Rajput from Pretoria was appointed the new principal of the Indian School in Benoni; he later changed his surname to Bechan. The vice-principal was a 'Malay' man, Mr Gassiep.

One of the good practices at the schools at that time, but which has since fallen by the wayside, was encouraging pupils to save. Every Wednesday morning 'savings stamps' monies were collected from pupils.

In March or April 1954 I received a phone call from the school board informing me that I was seconded to William Hills High school. I spent two very good years there and during that time Mr Martin Jansen was the principal. Four teachers from this school would later become university professors overseas: Issie Mohamed, the brilliant mathematician; Xavier Carelse, the genius astrophysicist; the enigmatic and brilliant 'Lottie' Behrens, a musician, sportsman and mathematician; and Maurice Hommel, a political scientist, and a very close friend of mine.

Because Mr AS Jansen did not have the required academic qualifications to become the permanent principal of William Hills High School, he resigned and moved with his family to the Cape. Mr George Carr, the first Coloured man to receive a BA and BEd in the Transvaal province, became the principal at William Hills High. He was very involved in politics and this was probably one of the reasons he resigned after a few years and left for England. By the early 1960s about fifteen teaching staff members of William Hills High had left for overseas. Billy Hoods, George Carr and George Harris wrote a letter about education in South Africa to the United Nations.

I returned to the Benoni Indian School in 1957, the year I got married and also moved back to Benoni. I taught Standard 9 at the Indian School for about six years, by which time our daughter was six years old and ready for school. Although both our children were bilingual, their home language was English as my wife could not speak Afrikaans. This was a big problem for us. The Coloured school, less than two minutes from our home, was Afrikaans medium; our children were Coloured so could not attend the English-medium Indian school next door. In fact, not a single Coloured school east of Johannesburg, in Springs, Modder

B, Modderfontein, Boksburg or Germiston, had English as the medium of instruction. Fortunately, we were able to 'buy' a house in Riverlea and I got a teaching position at the Coronationville High School. Mr Hobbs, one of my former 'hero teachers' in Standards 7 and 8 was the principal. I taught Afrikaans to Standard 7 classes, but not for long.

Some of the people whose lives have touched my life

I fondly remember my oupa Marthinus du Preez for his kindness, his ability to stay calm and for his humorous after-dinner anecdotes. I admire Ouma du Preez for her straightforwardness, even though I sometimes quaked before it. I admired both of them and also Ouma Jansen for their steadfast faith in God and prayer. My uncle Martin Jansen, my mother's brother, was dignified, upright physically and in spirit; perhaps the most respected man in Benoni.

My father-in-law Gilbert Dunn, Dad, was an avid reader, an intelligent and well-spoken man. He later became a 'true' Christian after a 'miraculous' escape from death. My uncle Martin Ehrenreich, Uncle Ernie or Meneer, is remembered for his fastidious neatness and sartorial style: collar-and-tie, suit, Battersby or Wilson hat and gleaming shoes. I loved my uncle Ernie's voice. He was a 'simple' man with style. As tennis captain Uncle Ernie led the Mountaineers Club to many victories. Uncle Ernie spent an unbelievable sixty years in the classroom, many of them as vice-principal.

Mr Manwell Felix, from Port Elizabeth, was our very first teacher with a university degree. He was the kind of person everybody respected: dedicated, friendly, honest and strict. Mr Alfred Hoskins ('Hossie') was a provincial and national tennis champion. He was my other 'hero teacher', an outstanding English and Music teacher, although he made generous use of the cane as a learning aid. Mr AS Jansen commanded respect from everybody – students as well as teachers. His stature of 6 feet 6 inches, steady gaze and pleasantly strong voice all added to his clean living, honesty and integrity. His unwavering belief in the Bible was the base of his thinking, words of advice and living. Mr Ernest Hobbs was my Standard 7 and 8 Science and Bookkeeping teacher and, like Hossie, was a 'hero teacher'. These three teachers inspired, encouraged and helped me and my friend Cyril Arendse to be the very first William Hills High students to obtain First Class passes.

The Old Benoni Location in the 1930s to 1950s

Continuing west on Third Street would take you to the Coloured Section. At the fourth intersection (Fourth Avenue), still along Third Street, the police station is on the right. You are now in the 'native' Section, which goes right down to the sixth cross street (Sixth Avenue). As you cross Sixth Avenue you enter the Indian Section, which like the Native Section, stretches from First Street to Sixteenth Street. Surrounding the Indian and Native Sections, separated by a railway line, is Wattville, a Black Township named after some obscure White person.

There were storefronts all along Sixth Avenue across the Black area: greengrocers, grocers, drapery stores, barbers, butchers, fish-and-chips stores, and auto repair facilities. In First Street there were the Poonsammys, the Moodleys, and Roger Peters whose home language was Afrikaans. Another well-known family were the Rahmans, who also owned stores in the Coloured Section.

I recall how Vicky and Willy Toweel, the champion boxers, often drove their dad Mike in Vicky's car to one of the butcheries in the Indian Section. I can still remember the registration plates: TA 777.

The richest family, I heard, was the Fazels. An unfortunate incident, however, sullied their name and standing. Mr Fazel's son had apparently strapped a Black boy that worked for him. The boy died. When his friends and family returned

from the funeral, many started stoning not only the Fazel's store, but all the Indian stores. There were sporadic 'riots' over weeks, and many petrol bombs were thrown into stores. White police were on 'permanent' patrol every evening. They were armed. The Africa-Indian 'riots' in Durban were still fresh in our memories at the time. It took a while but these 'protests' against the Indian merchants finally ended.

I was working part-time at the Varachia's store at the time. Lots of people in the Coloured area bought groceries, cigarettes and other scarce products on credit – so did we – and paid at the end of each month. I was teaching at the time. What embarrassed me was that I often had to mail 'reminders' to people I knew – including teachers – that their accounts were 'outstanding' and may be 'turned over to 'our' lawyers'! Fortunately, I did not have my name or signature on any such note.

The Black Section lies between the Indian and Coloured Section. Through playing tennis on Wednesdays after school from about 15:00 to18:30, I came to know Mr Sos Makgokong, the principal of the Catholic school. He lived in the Coloured area. I also knew Mr Steve Moloedi and his son Fred.

No homes in the three sections of the location were freehold. We could own the physical structure, but not the stand on which it was built.

There were two 'Gold Laws' protected areas: one in the Coloured area called Parktown by the locals, later Actonville, and one next to the Indian Primary School. There were a few White-owned shops in the Parktown area.

From Third Street and Fourth Avenue, the Black Section stretched right through to Sixteenth Street. The Square was the heart of the Black Section. Many public meetings and some celebrations were held there. The unofficial mayor of Benoni lived there. He was known to all as Mr Makau: dignified, well-spoken and with a beautiful personality.

There also was a 'no-man's-land' area, with two dams, the old tennis courts, clay tennis courts, and the Davey Social Centre.

A newer 'lah-di-dah' Coloured area was named Parktown. On Upington Street alone there lived, as I remember, eighteen teachers. This included me, before I moved to Alice Street closer to the school. One weekend after returning from visiting my parents in Protea we found our home had been burgled. Our house was literally cleaned out. The robbers also stole our best music records, including *Ella Fitzgerald and the Girls* and an irreplaceable recording that my brother Joe had made with Nico Carstens.

The Benoni and Newclare/Coronationville Congregational (Coloured) churches were among the first churches in the area to have a resident Coloured minister. In Newclare it was Rev H Samuels, in Benoni we had Rev W Bergins from the Cape. Benoni had another 'first'. We had the first high school where the staff, principal and vice-principal were all Coloured. Many of the teachers in Benoni were born there, and many others had grown up in Benoni.

The Coloured Section: From First to Fourth Street

I came across many different people in my time in Benoni; I knew wonderful 'sinners' and woefully weak 'saints'; not-very-brainy teachers and highly intelligent miners and workers. Some of the people and places I remember are: The Star bioscope (cinema). Oom Johnny Minnaar and Aunt Helen and their two daughters; Cynthia married Ronnie Peterson, and Zelda married Hymie Adams. Oom Chookie Thomas and the De Jagers. Jimmy Jefferies, who worked for Dingles Tobacco for many, many years. We sang in the famous male-voice church choir, and we played tennis in the Mountaineers Club.

In Fourth Street extension were the Fosters: Abie, Robert, Henry, John and one more son. Then there were Maria (married to Mr De Jager) and Aunty Celly, Violet, Ollie and Maurice. On Third Street, our

only paved road, there were the Ruiters, Mr and Mrs Francis, Violet, Catherine and Jackie, Mr Dan Noble, Mr and Mrs Brink. Across the road was the Anglican Church and Mr and Mrs Clarke from the Free State. On the corner of Third and Fourth Avenue was Oom Ben le Roux's garage, where we took our cars to be fixed. We took cars there mainly for non-mechanical work like welding to the exhaust system. Oom Ben later had a more knowledgeable partner, Davey Fransch. On Sundays Harry, Fay, Derrick de Jager, myself and two others met in the back room at Harry Hong's Shop discussing our beliefs (or non-beliefs) and our strategies in our fight for freedom. It was more light-hearted chatter than philosophical or political discussion.

Mr Joey Noble (a teacher) married Mienie Burns. They had a posh wedding. I also remember Wilfred Hank and George Britten. Aunty Daisy, Oom Johannes's daughter, did 'tea-leaf reading'. Teacher Joey later moved to Potchefstroom and his house on Third Street was taken over by the Tombeens. I believe they had a hard time being 'accepted'. They did not stay long and the house was then occupied by the Felixes. Mr Felix, a shoemaker, and family also were not readily accepted by the community.

Louis Hank married Gertie, Mrs Sawyer's daughter. Next to the Sawyers were the Balakistans. I know the elder brother, Georgie (I think was his name), was a quick-tempered guy. It was he who stabbed a friend of mine in the eye. Ivan, the younger brother, was also, I heard, quite a 'hot-head'.

I think the next home was that of Nurse Du Plessis and her children, Veril, Sydney ('Rice') and daughter Florence. On Second Avenue lived the Scheepers and the Fransch families, with six sons and five daughters.

Almost at the end of Third Street lived Alec Noble (Junior). Mr Alec Noble and Aunty Florrie had quite a large family. Just across from them lived my grandpa's eldest brother, Pieter du Preez. The last house on Third Street was that of Uncle James Triegaardt and Aunty Sophie (née Smith).

In the early 1960s, on a vacant lot on Fourth Street, just behind Uncle James, George Carr (then principal of William Hills) had a two-storey built. The only other two-storey in the area was that of Mr John de Jager, on First Street, built in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Second Street, Benoni (a microscopic look, remembering some of the families)

There was an area along Second Street that was generally referred to as Rooijaart, Red yard, from Second Street to the backyard on First Street. The front house was where the Ballots lived. I knew the parents of Alfie, Manus, the sister and the eldest brother. Alfie was an excellent teacher at the Benoni Indian School. He married Sheila, Aunt Koenie's daughter.

Mr De Jager's truck was also to serve a 'higher purpose', beyond its normal use. Every Christmas Eve the organ from our church was loaded onto the truck and a mixed-voice choir would sit or stand around the organ, then they would make their way to the Boksburg-Benoni Hospital where they would sing Christmas carols and hymns. I wonder if this tradition was continued in Reiger Park? On the other hand, 'how could they sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'

Next to the tennis court was the house of Mr and Mrs Clements (née Foster) and family: Lima, Attie (Attlee), 'Millie' and Loretta. So, we could walk through our backyard, through the court right to the Clementses' property.

All lots were actually double lots, very deep, so each lot fronted two streets. Almost all homes on our side of Second Street had the full lot and backed right onto First Street. Some enterprising people on Second Street, quite legally, erected small flats or even full-sized dwellings on their lots, and rented them out. The Burns family was a well-known, respected, very religious family. The children were Jack, Mammie, Nettie, John and Ethel. John was an

outstanding athlete and soccer player. Catherine (Whitey) married Manie Duarte. Mr and Mrs Walter Meintjies also lived on our street. Maria Foster who later moved to Mozambique, and then Durban, was my friend in Standard 5. The Bassons and some of the Frankes were all members of 'Die Blou Rokkies'.[2]

Aunt Nellie, like my mother, was the person who cooked soup and sliced bread for the school. Years later all schools had a school feeding programme. Full meals were prepared for teachers as well. Yes, just like the army 'fights on full stomachs' so students learn better on 'full stomachs.'

Martin du Preez was married to Alurice Foster. Martin had an older brother, Vivian. All of us were shocked when we heard that 'Vivvie' had been stabbed to death in Boksburg. Martin and I did not see eye-to-eye politically, but one can change one's politics. Blood runs thicker and deeper than politics.

The Hanks, a staunch Anglican family, were quite well-known and respected. Louis Hank and Mary had blue eyes. I knew little about Monty Hank, Louis's brother. Monty's son, Edward, was very young when his father passed away, but when I visited South Africa in 2006 I could tell Edward more about his uncle Louis, a teacher, and his grandmother, Christina Fritz; Edward's mom, Margareth Cecilia Tree, I knew well. She was a year or two ahead of me in school, and her brother and I were in the same class.

Jaffie and Bob Frankes got into trouble for illicit gold buying (IGB).

Oom Tappa Foster was a taxi owner and driver. I know of only one son he had: Georgie ('Poopie'). Georgie had a Syrian girlfriend and they had to elope to Kimberley, the closest Cape Province city. Those days mixed marriage was allowed in the Cape Province. Georgie was a very enterprising person.

There was Mr and Mrs Jegels. Later Mrs Jegels married Oom David du Preez, years after her husband had died. Oom David's first wife, Auntie Bettie (née De Jager) also passed away. Oom David's children were very upset when he remarried. Oom David's old age pension was stopped after someone (perhaps one of his children who was not happy with his new marriage?) reported to the authorities that he 'owned' property and received rental income. I wrote a letter on his behalf, but don't know if his pension was restored.

On Sundays I had to go to church at 11:00, then Sunday School at 14:00, have a lie-down after, and then took a walk with Derrick de Jager. Sunday evening service started at 18:00 or 19:00.

I also knew Saalie Hassen and Ghoemet. Ghoemet and I were blood donors for the Red Cross. Every two months we donated one pint. Ghoemet, however, gave another pint in the in-between months as well. The mines needed a lot of blood – they had many accidents – and they paid per pint.

Aunt V had a shebeen at the back on First Street. Next to Aunt V lived relative newcomers from the mine areas, I think the Olsens. Leon was in my Standard 8 class.

Where there used to be an empty lot with a little stream flowing through it, Uncle Sam Fransch built a beautiful brick house for himself and Aunt Phyllis, Oom David's daughter (Uncle Sam's first wife was Ms Jeptha). Uncle Sam and Auntie Philly adopted a son, Ockert. No one would have guessed that Ockert was not their biological son. Beryl and I visited Ockert and Kevin Ehrenreich in 2005-06.

Oom Sam Fransch and my Oupa Du Preez both worked at the Modderfontein Mines.

Parktown (renamed Actonville in the late 1950s)

The Harrises, later known as the Ambroses, lived in the backyard of Oom Boeta and his wife Nenna. The Ambrose children were Fred – who married Alice (Ettie) Goliath – Joan, Ann and Jean, who married a doctor.

The house next door belonged to Oom Piet and Aunt Lenie Basson. They had a home church called The Way.

Boy (Beezy) Wagner became a doctor. He married

Cynthia Gray, a nurse. They had a son, Alliston. He and his mother emigrated to Canada some years after Boy had died in a car accident.

Uncle Sam's brother was Mr Charlie Fransch, the beautiful bass in the church choir. His entire family was very musical.

From Dunswart railway station we took a 'taxi', in the form of a horse-drawn carriage, for the two miles to the location. Mr Hassen owned and operated a taxi. Bobby Crawford and his wife had two sons, Manie and Peter. The Loggenbergs had three sons: Jimmy, Wilson and Harry. In the Magerman family, old Mrs Magerman was my teacher at primary school. Her son Oom Piet and his wife Aunt Mary also lived in the area. Her daughter Ann married Andrew Fredericks. Oom Piet and Aunty Mary had three boys; Peter, Glenn and one who died quite young.

Mr Fredericks, an Afrikaans teacher, originally from Kimberley, supported the policies of the National Party.

The De Jagers lived here for many years and when Mr De Jager built a new home in their backyard, facing First Street, the Goliaths – who had come from Alexandria – moved into the home facing Second Street. I knew both families very well. Mr De Jager and Mr Goliath were both widowers who had remarried and had children from their first marriages. Bertie Goliath and I taught together at the Benoni Indian School. He was my nemesis in singles tennis. The De Jager sons from Mr De Jager's first marriage were Derrick, a lawyer who died 'mysteriously' but most of us believed he had been murdered, and Johnny, a math teacher, who was also a very dear friend. Mr De Jager's second wife, Maria (née Foster), had six children: Mabel, who married Rev E Du Plessis; Winston; Vernon; Allan; Maria and Alma.

Oom Charlie Liesering sang in the male choir; he had a remarkable alto, countertenor voice. In the backyard of this group of homes were rental flats, most of them facing First Street. Among the people that lived there were Uncle David du Preez, his daughter Irene and her husband Martin Ehrenreich. Their son Willie died days after his birth.

Behind that house was George Carr and his wife with their daughter Patricia. She now lives in Toronto and her younger sister Sheila lives in England. Daphne, the youngest, was born later. She died in England. An adopted son Gregory is also living in Canada.

Audrey Wade, 'Auble', later bought Uncle David's house. That was when Benoni was 'declared' an Indian area and was renamed Actonville. Because she was married to an Indian man, she was allowed to live in Actonville. All Coloureds were to go to Reiger Park, the newly declared Coloured area under the Group Areas Act.

Although my wife and I had bought a lot and had plans drawn for a house in Reiger Park, we decided to move to another Coloured area in Johannesburg, called Riverlea. This area was next to huge mounds of sand from the mine dumps left after gold had been extracted and the mines abandoned. The 'immediate' reason why we moved to Johannesburg was to get our children into an English-medium school.

Businesses in the Coloured Section

Solly Patel had a well-stocked grocery store. Solly Patel's stepdaughter Edith married Justice Cimmers and is now living in British Columbia, Canada.

Oom David and others got rid of their horses, cows and wagons, and bought and operated taxis. Oom John de Jager (Oom Doonie) owned two taxis: one he drove, the other driven by a relative. Mr De Jager later opened a butcher shop attached to his home and named it Villa Airam – his wife's name spelt backwards.

After Uncle C Smith's death Oom Piet Magerman bought his property and then erected a large building on the lot; one part of it was for his dry-cleaning business, which was operated by Achmat Petersen and Eddy Adams. The bigger section he rented to 'Georgie', Lai Khan's brother.

Marthinus and Beryl du Preez (Du Preez collection).

Further up First Street Oom 'Boekie' Opperman, formerly a taxi owner and driver, opened a fish-and-chips shop. Others who owned and drove taxis were Ernst (Bimbo) Fransch and Koekie Clements.

There were a few self-employed shebeen owners.

Mrs Chrestwill was a private money lender, charging interest at 5% per week, with six weeks to repay the principal amount. I know of some teachers who borrowed from her.

Some people in the area gambled in a game called fafi (pronounced fah-fee). It was operated by three Chinese runners; in the game there were about 36 numbers, each which represented an animal, object or a person.

During the war a White man owned a petrol station next to where Billy Hoods lived.

By the late 1950s the Old Benoni Location was declared an Indian area. In 1964 Coloureds had to move about six to seven miles to the newly declared Coloured area, Reiger Park in Boksburg.

I believe that the second generation of De Jagers, Fosters, Clements and Magermans, among others, have become successful businesspeople in Reiger Park.

We arrived in Canada on 5 April 1965

My mother died not long before we departed for Canada. What really helped us to make up our minds to leave South Africa was the introduction of 'Coloured Education' and 'Indian Education',

after Verwoerd had brought in 'Bantu Education' forcing Black students to be taught in their mother tongue. We applied for our passports and had to get clearance from the police. The police officer knew the answers to the questions he asked, and he often 'put the answers in my mouth'! You are not a communist? Of course not! How come you know Derrick de Jager? He was a very close friend of mine, and also the first and only Coloured lawyer in the province at the time. We researched options of travelling by ocean liner to England and then to Canada. We boarded the *Southern Cross* in Durban on our way to Cape Town and we left from there the next day. We arrived at Victoria Station in England two weeks after leaving South Africa, including a half-day stop at the Canary Islands.

The last school I taught at was Firgrove Public School in Toronto, Canada, for nine years before I retired in 1988.

(Re)visiting home

I revisited my 'alma mater', my Benoni, my Son-of-Sorrows in the perilous South Africa of the 1980s. Not only did I not know 'where I was', but more hurtful and destructive than not knowing that, was to be asked by a person I had known from Sub A through to Standard 8: 'Who are you?' I was unknown in an unknown place! Lost! Twenty-three years of bachelor life, childhood, plus six years of married life – the very foundation of 'me' – not just broken down but lost, wiped out! All, all gone! Later that evening I cried.

We visited Benoni again in 2006. I remain a 'doubting believer'. There is too much resentment, hatred and debilitating anger pent up in me to make me 'religious' or 'forgiving'. Am I an angry 'believer'?[3]

My Fostering Mother, alma mater, Benoni Old Location is dead, but fortunately, the memories of events, of relatives, of friends and also of bitter experiences will stay with me. Some will remain fresh, many will change in the telling, certain ones will fade with age – theirs and mine. I am happy I can share them.

The road not taken
Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other […]

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood and I –
I took the one less travelled by,
And *that has made all the difference.*

And so did quite a few others, especially from the Jansen side. They and their descendants can be found across the world: the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden, and Barbados. And of course in South Africa.

God bless you all.
Love,
Tienie du Preez

Edited by Cecil H Morden.

14

Benoni, son of my sorrow

Dwight Triegaardt

The name Benoni or Ben-Oni, meaning son of my sorrow/pain, was the original name of Benjamin. According to the Hebrew Bible, Benjamin's name arose when Jacob deliberately changed the name of Benoni to Benjamin, since "Benoni" was an allusion to Rachel's dying just after she had given birth to her son. Soon after his birth and his mother's death, Jacob, her husband, renamed the child Benjamin. The name Benoni is anglicised from the Hebrew Ben-Owny, sometimes also spelled Ben-Oni. Some scholars dispute the accepted translation of Ben-Oni to mean "son of my sorrow" or pain. They claim that a more correct translation would be to mean "Son of my Lord". The scholars making this argument base it on Igbo, one of the languages of Nigeria.

More recently though, the term Benoni may refer to places (e.g., the town on the East Rand) or to people (e.g., Mr Benoni Fuller, 1825–1903 or Mr Guiseppe Benoni) or to moves in the game of chess (e.g., the Benoni Defence, or the Franco-Benoni move).

In the early 1800s, a group of Voortrekkers fleeing from the British-ruled Cape and Natal colonies arrived in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek.[478]

They sought refuge as far from the British colonies as was possible at that time. Four farms surrounded an empty piece of land which was referred to as *uitvalgrond* i.e. land that was not suitable for agriculture or human habitation. These farms were Rietfontein, Kleinfontein, Vlakfontein and Modderfontein. Two streams ran through these farms just north of Rietfontein.

JH Botha bought one of these farms and named it Kleinfontein. The Modderfontein farm covered approximately 2 900 hectares on which gold was later discovered. In 1862 the Rietfontein farm was granted to DJ Strydom. This area covered 1 118 hectares. In 1897 coal mining commenced on this farm before the Apex Gold mine was established on the site. The Vlakfontein farm was owned by the Nel family and covered approximately 3 700 hectares. The Van Ryn Gold mines estate was established here and today the farm is the site of

The Triegaardt famiy: Front: Melvyn, Nathan and Robert. Back: Dwight, Bob, Keir (baby), Rita, Winston (Triegaardt collection).

the Benoni Country Club. The Modderfontein farm was established around 1873 and held very large deposits of gold. Homestead and Kleinfontein dams were created to provide water to the mines, by damming the water that flowed from the two streams. These dams still exist today and were used for water sports and picnic sites.

The first gold mine in Benoni was registered in 1887 when outcrops of gold on all four farms converged on the site of present-day Benoni. Though gold was first discovered in 1860, the viability to mine on a large scale only occurred in 1887 when Benoni was established as a mining camp. Gold was discovered in the area one year after the city of Johannesburg was founded. Benoni was officially declared a town in 1907. It is 1 652 m above sea level. The distance from Benoni to Johannesburg is 28 km. Today gold mining has ceased and the town is noted for its iron and steel works, as well as brass foundry.

The literature on Black, Coloured and Indian communities who lived in the East Rand townships before 1960 is quite sparse. In my estimation, it is not an oversight, but a deliberate attempt to suppress these communities in their opposition to the apartheid government's Group Areas policies. Prior to 1960 these communities lived in harmony in what was then known as the Old Location (Kasie) of Benoni. The best authoritative treatise on the subject is Noor Nieftagodien's Wits thesis, entitled "The Implementation of Urban Apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973".[1]

As the production of gold mining decreased, and several mines on the East Rand closed down, we witnessed a rapid increase in the establishment of secondary industries on the East Rand. This concomitant industrialisation of the East Rand resulted in a rapid and uncontrolled influx of mainly Black, and to a lesser extent also Coloured, Indian and Chinese people. Since the prospect of new work opportunities attracted these newcomers to the East Rand, problems arose for the local municipalities of Germiston, Boksburg, Benoni, Brakpan and Springs. The National Party government soon realised that the Black population of the East Rand now far exceeded that of the White inhabitants. Most of the Black people first settled in Wattville but, due to overcrowding, the excess people spilled over to the Old Location where Coloured, Indian and Black residents were already living cheek by jowl. Conflict between Indian people, mostly traders and landlords, and Black people, mainly labourers, were sporadic, while Coloured people were often aloof of these discords.

Establishment of Group Areas on the East Rand

The amended Group Areas Act was passed in 1957. This act was established to force local municipalities to develop separate areas for each of the different 'Black' groups away from the White group, and to develop industries that would form a buffer between White people and the respective 'Black' groupings. Many local industries were concerned about the possible disruption such areas would bring to their supply of labour. . The Coloured labour force was largely made up of artisans, while

the Black labour force was unskilled labour in the main. Indians were largely involved in commerce; thus the local authorities were far less interested in housing them.

None of the local authorities were over enthusiastic about the government policy of separate development, such that the process took more than ten years to come to fruition. The National Party in the Transvaal realised that the local authorities of the East Rand were raising concerns about the cost that such mass movement of people would require. They realised that a massive housing shortage was developing, especially in Benoni and Germiston and to a lesser extent in Boksburg and Springs. When the National Party finally took over the local authorities of Benoni and Germiston, they dispatched their heavyweights, the likes of HF Verwoerd and PW Botha, to exert more pressure on those recalcitrant municipalities to proceed with haste with the implementation of separate Group Areas in those areas under their control.

The National Party in particular, and other Afrikaner institutions in general, were vociferous in their attempts to have the Coloured residents remain in Benoni, and that the Indians in turn should be relocated to Boksburg. They further claimed that Coloureds had a historical claim over Indians in matters of residential rights. PW Botha, the Minister of Community Development in 1961, was dispatched to explain to the Afrikaner establishment the importance of its Group Areas policy, and nothing would detract them from its implementation. The little resistance by the Coloured, Black and Indian people to forced removal was simply brushed aside.

The Old Location has become a slum area and Actonville could not expand any further: it was bordered by industries, the Forestry Department, farms and two large dams, as well as the Old Location. By 1964 there was no possibility of expanding Actonville to accommodate the younger, growing Coloured population. Among themselves then, the municipalities agreed that Benoni would become an Indian area, Boksburg would be for the Coloured people, and a new township called Daveyton was established for the Black population. A sad feature of Daveyton (in Benoni), was that Black people were resettled along tribal lines. Thus, Zulus were separated from Xhosas, who in turn were separated from Sothos, and they in turn were separated from 'other' Black tribes, particularly those from neighbouring countries.

Prior to 1940 Coloured, Indian and Black people lived in what was then known as the Old Location. It was a vast area. Coloured people occupied the first four streets, Indians were to the north and Black inhabitants lived in the rest of the location. Over the years, small Coloured and Indian communities settled in towns on the East Rand such as Boksburg, Benoni Location, Springs, Germiston and Nigel. Smaller villages such as Petit, Van Dyck mines, Putfontein and Modderfontein also housed smaller numbers of these communities, most of whom worked above ground for the mines.

In 1940 the Benoni municipality identified a piece of land south of the city for development and named the area Actonville. The first 156 homes for the designated Coloured population were then built. The rapid industrial development of the East Rand, and the concomitant growth in numbers as the gold and coal industries grew, compounded the housing problem for all these groups. By 1950 an additional 400 houses were built, and the municipality could not identify any more land in Actonville for further growth.

This situation led to the Group Areas Act flexing its muscle, which led to the municipalities of Benoni and Boksburg taking the decision that all Coloureds would relocate to Boksburg, while the Indian community would be settled in Benoni. The decision to relocate to Boksburg was met with very little resistance from both groups, and in the early 1960s the relocation was complete.

The only shop in Actonville was owned by a Greek trader, but in the Old Location a butchery was owned and run by Mr John de Jager (Oom Doonie) and a dry cleaners, Pixie Dry Cleaners, was owned by Mr P Magerman (Oom Piet). Many smaller shops in the Old Location were owned and run by Indians.

Two primary schools, one for Coloureds and the other for Indians, next to each other and separated by a wire fence, were the major feeder schools for the high school, William Hills. The high school was named after Mr William Hills. The Hills family owned most of the local newspapers such as *Benoni City Times* and the *Boksburg Advertiser*. The original Hills family was very active in horse racing, which was predominantly held at the Dunswart Race Course.

During my primary school days the principal was Mr Dick Bartiss, who later relocated to the United Kingdom. He was replaced by Mr Clarence September, who was tragically killed by a speeding motorist as he led a funeral procession to the Congregational Church in Boksburg. When the relocation to Boksburg was imminent, the first high school principal was Mr Martin Jansen (often referred to as "Oubaas" Jansen); his wife was my Grade 1 teacher. While in her class, I often took her a bunch of flowers from my dad's garden. During summer I would take her a basket of fruit, also from our garden. Mr Jansen passed away suddenly and his younger brother, Mr Alec Jansen, whose family was our next-door neighbour in Upington Street, Actonville, replaced him as principal. After I matriculated in 1961, the exodus of Coloured people from Actonville was in full swing. As a matter of principle Mr George Carr, the high school principal, was not prepared to accept this Bantustan policy that was being forced upon us, and he relocated to the UK where he passed away many years later.

During my matric year William Hills High School had a large number of university graduates who taught there. Some teachers and administrators at that time were: Principal, Mr George Carr (MA, MEd); Vice Principal, Mr Alfie Hoskins (BA, BEd); Dr Issy Mohamed (PhD Group Theory, a branch of Mathematics); Messrs Abdullah (BA Latin); Cyril Adolph (BSc Zoology); Edgar Adolph (MSc Physics); Lottie Behrens (BSc, later gained PhD Physics); Defchan (BA Latin); John de Jager (BSc Hons, Maths and Math. Stats); Manwell Felix (MA English); Maurice Hommel (BA English, later gained PhD); Elbon Noble (BCom); Oliphant (BSc, Chemistry); Ralph Ontong (BA History); Rathinasamy (BCom), and Bob Triegaardt (BA Afrikaans).

The above is a sample of those teachers I still remember. The vast majority of the above relocated to overseas universities or schools in countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK. A small number of these are still alive today. A large percentage of pupils came from towns as far as Springs and Nigel in the east to places like the suburbs of Johannesburg and beyond. It is a crying shame that highly qualified and dedicated teachers left South Africa due to the racist policies of this country. Their contribution to higher education in this country will never be realised or matched again.

Teachers at William Hills prided themselves in being the most politically conscious and progressive staff of any school in the Transvaal. A number of teachers at the school were instrumental in the formation of the Transvaal Indian and Coloured Teachers Association (TICTA). At this school, the following teachers formed the nucleus of TICTA: Mr George Carr (a former member of the SA Communist Party) and Messrs Rathinsamy, Derrick de Jager, Claude Noble and Toughey Markham. TICTA was dissolved when most of the teachers left the country for positions abroad.

It was at about this time that the City Councils of Benoni and Boksburg decided to separate the groups into separate 'Group Areas'. Boksburg was to become the centre for Coloured people, while Indians were to displace the Coloured community of Actonville and the Old Location where all three groups had

lived in harmony, side by side. In the mid-1950s the Coloured community organised themselves to form a collective to look after the community's interests. A Ratepayers Association was formed, and Mr George Carr was the chairperson. Other members included my father Bob Triegaardt, Messrs Clarence September, Alec Jooste, Billy Hoods, Max Felix, John Liesering, and others. Their mandate was to protect the interest and future of the people of Actonville. Their discussions with the City Council concerning the removal of Coloureds came to naught. No violent protests took place, and in the end the people of Actonville accepted their fate, and the relocation commenced. Many of the residents relocated to Boksburg, while a few moved to other cities, or even abroad.

During the time that Coloured people still lived in Actonville, all the streets had names of towns or cities predominantly from the Cape Province. We lived on Upington Street. Other street names included Kimberley, Montague, Paarl and Caledon. I recently took my family to Actonville to show them where I grew up. I was amazed to notice that all the streets now have Indian names. Perhaps this is part of the reason why the early history of Actonville is not reported in the print media.

In 2014 Ms Hemisha Bhana launched a book called *Portraits of Actonville* at the Actonville Flea Market. The book is based on research she did as a Fine Arts student at Wits University. Oral evidence was collected from the "older community members" residing in Actonville. Since the literature is sparse on the history of Actonville, the evidence she collected was through interviews of the elders of the Indian community resident in Actonville. No mention was made to her of the fact that hundreds of Coloured families were displaced. Thus, she can be pardoned for being misled (unintentionally, I hope) by her elders who should have informed her of the earlier history of Actonville.[2]

I enjoyed growing up in Benoni, as life was beautiful then. At William Hills High School I played soccer, cricket and tennis. A retired schoolteacher, Mr Van der Haer, lived diagonally across the street from our home in Upington Street. He was the former wicketkeeper of the Transvaal Cricket Union. He taught us the basics of the game, and I played for the high school. Soccer was perhaps the most popular sport then. The Eastern Transvaal Soccer Union consisted of clubs from Benoni, Springs, Boksburg and Germiston. At age 7, I was the secretary of the Junior Benoni Callies soccer club. In later years I concentrated more on cricket. A number of parents would take their children to the Wanderers Cricket Ground whenever an overseas team would tour South Africa. No people of colour could play for the country. We would take the train to Ellis Park Station, and from there the Alexander Township bus to William Nicol Street and from there walk to the stadium. My brothers could not understand how I could do this for five consecutive days. The part of the stadium reserved for people of colour was very small, perhaps only one-tenth of the entire stadium, and it was important to get there early lest the 'non-white' section fill up before we got there.

Triegaardt family

My father, Robert James Triegaardt, was born in Kimberley, and my mum, Maria Catherine Rita (née Brown), was born in Windsorton. After their marriage they relocated to Benoni. My father first taught at Benoni Primary School. He later became principal of the primary school in Edenvale then taught at William Hills High School, which most of my brothers attended. I am the second eldest of six sons.

My father was a deeply religious, multifaceted man. My reasons for making this statement I detail below. In sport, he was the Chairperson of Arabians soccer club, as well as the President of the East Rand Inter-Race Soccer Board. He was also a coach and referee of the Women's Netball Association. In civic affairs he was an elected member of the

Coloured Advisory Council (CAC) in 1951-52, when I was a mere six-year-old. Other elected members to this Council were George Carr, P de Jager, Alec Jansen and W Peterson. He was also very active in several welfare organisations. In education he was a member of the Transvaal Teachers Association, a teacher and a school principal. In religion he was a deacon in the Congregational Church, and often played a role in the church choir. He also served on the Transvaal Congregational Church Union as Treasurer. My father was an avid gardener, and often won first prize for his beautiful gardens. This skill he learned from his father, my grandfather, who was Sir Ernest Oppenheimer's valet; together, they developed the Kimberley Gardens, which still exists today on the road from the airport to the city centre.

My mother, known as Rita, supported my father in many ways which contributed to him being able to participate in community affairs, being successful as a community leader and being involved in education. She assisted him with his garden and his music and raised six sons, which is no mean feat. She was the backbone of our family.

My schooling

I matriculated from William Hills in 1961. Because the school attained such good results from matric classes prior to 1959, the Transvaal Education Department decided that matric exams were to be held at the White school (Benoni High). Thus, the classes of matriculants between 1960 and 1962 wrote their matric exams at this White school. The Education Department had three exit levels for learners: students could exit at Standard 8 with a School Leaving Certificate, or at Standard 10 with either a Senior Certificate, or a University Entrance Certificate (A Stream). There were only three students in the university entrance class during my matric year at William Hills High School: me, Wing Him Sam and Radakrishnan Vythilingam. My small matric class had 100% A Stream passes, and all three of us were accepted into medicine at Wits University. When I was forced to leave, the other two proceeded to complete their medical studies. Dr Vythilingam has since passed on, while I have lost complete contact with Dr Wing Him Sam. All attempts to establish contact with him were in vain.

I was forced to leave the University of Witwatersrand in September of my first year of medicine when my uncle, RGB Triegaardt (Uncle Dick), was banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. I spent the rest of that year and the whole of the following year in bed reading the Bible. I was determined to find out why this God, if he was such a living God as he was portrayed to be, could be so harsh, and by his will force me to leave the university. By then my father was pretty fed up with my behaviour. Towards the end of that year (1963) he entered my room and told me that there was no place in his house for loafers. His ultimatum was that either I go to UWC which was created for Coloured students and did not have a medical faculty, or I find myself a job. I pondered over this for several months and decided to go to UWC to do a degree in Science. I arrived at UWC in March of 1964, where classes had been in session for two months. I hated the institution for the reasons it was formed and had to cope with lecturers who were not equipped to be there; furthermore, they lectured only in Afrikaans.

Upon completion of my degree at UWC I was forced into exile, and continued my studies in Canada and the USA. While in Canada, I enrolled at York University, Toronto, for my honours degree in chemistry. I was granted "Landed Immigration" status in Canada, on condition that I would get married within one month of my landing there. Fortunately, I was by then engaged to a lovely young lady, Jean, who is still my wife today.

Together we moved to the USA where I was accepted into the master's programme in chemistry at a university there. Upon graduating with a master's in chemistry, I continued my studies by enrolling for the PhD in chemistry at Washington

University in St Louis, Missouri, USA. My research promoter was Prof Arthur C Wahl, who was one of the discoverers of the element plutonium. Incidentally, this is the element that was the radioactive substance in the atomic bombs that the USA dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The element plutonium was discovered by Prof Wahl, and others, when he was a twenty-something postdoctoral student under Nobel laureate Prof Glenn T Seaborg, who had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1951.

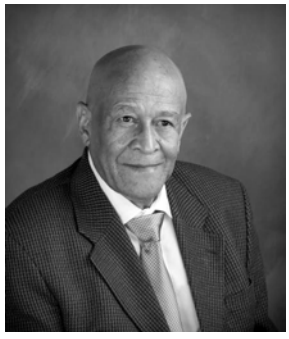
My wife Jean, a BA (Social Science) graduate from UWC, and I emigrated to Canada to join her parents there. Her father John Kester was the former president (1948–1967) of the SA Coloured Rugby Board (known as SARU from 1962), who hurriedly emigrated to Canada to escape the wrath of the Special Branch. The SA Rugby Board at that time refused to play against Maoris in the New Zealand national team on the suggestion of Dr Danie Craven, the president of the Whites-only SA Rugby Board. If they agreed to play the New Zealand Maori team, White SA Rugby would then be able to play against the All Blacks and in return SARU would receive the gate takings from the SA vs All Blacks match at Newlands Rugby Stadium in Cape Town.

While on a postdoctoral assignment in chemistry at the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio, I hurriedly returned to SA in 1983 as my mother was dying of colon cancer. I received a 'warm welcome' from the Security Police when I arrived at Jan Smuts airport (today: OR Tambo) a few days after I received the bad news about my mother. I left Jean and our baby daughter Allison in Columbus, Ohio, as I did not want them to experience the wrath and hostility of the Security Police. I was detained at the airport by the Security Police and warned to stop my liaison with the Black Consciousness Movement in general, and Jakes Gerwel and Johnny Issel in particular. My parents were there to meet me, but left the airport when I had not exited after several hours. When I was finally allowed to leave the airport, I had to assemble my luggage which was strewn all over the floor. After exiting, I proceeded to call my parents who, by then, had left for home. To my horror I realised that I had no South African money for the public phone. A very kind old lady gave me money for the call, but refused to accept American cash in return.

My parents had by that time relocated to Reiger Park in Boksburg and my mother battled cancer for a few more years. I then took up a post as Head of the School of Applied Sciences at the Peninsula Technikon in Bellville, headed by Franklin Sonn as rector. I was interviewed for the post by Franklin in New York where he was on assignment. Jean and my daughter joined me in Cape Town, where we bought a house in Crawford, and the Security Police were behaving themselves by leaving me alone. Jean took up a teaching post in the Department of Social Work at UCT. Later, she completed her PhD in social work from St Louis University while teaching at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. We have two daughters, Allison and Melanie, with a granddaughter, Maya. Allison is in the television industry and Melanie is in the music industry.

People who were either born or lived in Benoni[3]

Several sporting personalities were born or lived in Benoni. Faith Habana (née Henry) is Bryan Habana's mother. He is a former Springbok player and credited with scoring the second-most test match tries in world rugby. He was part of the team that won the World Cup in 2007. He was selected as international player for the year in 2007 by the International Rugby Board. The Toweel boxers, Vic and Willie, were of Lebanese descent. Vic was born in Benoni on 12 January 1928. He was the first South African to hold a world boxing title when, on 31 May 1950, he won the world bantamweight title. He passed away on 15 August 2008 in Australia. Philip Holiday, a world champion boxer, was also born in town on 23 May 1970. He won



Dr Dwight Triegaardt (Triegaardt collection).

the world International Boxing Federation (IBF) Lightweight title in 1995 by defeating Miguel Julio. Like the Toweels, he later emigrated to Australia. Frith van der Merwe, a schoolteacher, was born in Benoni on 26 May 1964. She holds the record time for the down run of the Comrades Marathon, as well as the record for the Two Oceans Marathon. Her times for these victories have not been broken since 1989. Charlene Wittstock, a former Olympic swimmer, was born in Zimbabwe, but relocated to Benoni with her parents in 1989. She later married Prince Albert II and became the Princess of Monaco.

An Academy Award winner had her beginnings in Benoni. Charlize Theron (Oscar-winning actress) was born here on 7 August 1975. She is an only child, and she and her mother initially relocated to Europe and later to the United States where she established herself as a sought-after actress since the early 1990s. She gained general early acclaim with the movie *The Devil's Advocate* (1997), and won an Oscar, the Golden Globe and the Screen Actors Guild awards for her portrayal of a killer prostitute in *Monster* (2003). She remains much in demand as an actress, film producer, social activist and a UN Messenger of Peace.

Alfred Nzo and OR Tambo were among the politicians to be born or lived in Benoni. Nzo was born on 19 June 1925, left for exile and served as the longest-standing secretary-general of the African National Congress from 1969-91. He served as the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1994 to 1999. Although not born in Benoni, Oliver 'OR' Tambo (b. 27 October 1917, Bizana), lived in the town until he was forced into exile in 1960. In 1959 he was banned for five years due to his membership of the ANC. He served as secretary-general (1955-57), deputy-president (1958-66) and in exile as President of the ANC (1967-91). He is credited for building his organisation into an important anti-apartheid force during its period of enforced exile.

15

Reiger Park, my family and me

Mahomed Navsa

The title of my chapter is not borne of hubris but of a deep and abiding affection for a township and community that I spent more than four decades getting to know and love. My life was enriched there, and I hope that I made some contribution to the community. It was an unlikely connection, given the history of my family and our early years in the community. To truly understand that connection and our early struggles it is necessary to explore that history, including my family's ethnic heritage.

My dad, Solomon Navsa, was a self-made man with driving ambition and unshakeable determination and was someone who was unmistakably head of his family. He had a fierce temper, brooked no opposition and, like most of his generation and as experienced by most of my generation, was someone who lived by the motto 'you live in my house you live by my rules'. He was born in Malvern, Johannesburg to poor parents. By all accounts his father, after whom I was named, was a deeply devout Muslim, who placed very little faith in the material world and was more concerned about his connection to God.

My paternal grandfather came from a village called Dabhel, near the town of Surat in Gujarat Province, India. Like many of his generation he came to South Africa to escape poverty and to support the family back home. My father's mother, Fatiema Camrodien, was of Malay origin, at least according to our apartheid past's Population Registration regime. Photographs of her mother, Nahara Hendricks, testify that she could have been from Java or Indonesia. Regrettably, we have not been able to establish her precise origins.

According to my grandmother, Nahara used to do laundry for the household of Paul Kruger, another aspect we have been unable to verify. My grandmother and her mother, according to my eldest paternal cousin, specialised in the starching of collars and cuffs using, among others, candle wax. In case you're wondering about the timelines. My grandmother lived till well into her nineties and her mother by all accounts also lived a long life. My dad

Judge of the Appeal Court Mahomed Navsa (Navsa collection).

was ninety-six years old when he died. With the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer war, according to my grandmother, she and her mother were transported to Cape Town in cattle trucks. They lived in the vicinity of Signal Hill and did washing on the steps of the Seven Steps, District Six in Cape Town.

Later, they found their way back to the old Transvaal and my grandmother did laundry for a living, so I was told, in the old Fietas, or Vrededorp. She and my grandad met and married. My grandad established a shop in Bedfordview. He did not do very well and at one stage was sequestrated. He re-established financial well-being and earned a stellar reputation for honesty, by subsequently paying every merchant he had owed money to, pre-sequestration, the difference between the insolvency dividend and what he had owed. The nickname he received as a result thereof was 'Pound for Pound'. This was in reference to the fact that he had repaid his debts ''pound for pound'. It is a nickname of which we, his descendants, are rightly proud. My mother told me that my grandfather died a poor man but that his funeral was attended by many, many people from all over the old Transvaal, a testament to how highly he was regarded. My grandfather died before I was born, but I recall how, as a child whenever my dad and I paid a visit to Indian merchants along Diagonal Street in Johannesburg, or elsewhere, I would be asked rhetorically whether I was Pound for Pound's grandson.

My dad and his brother lived with their parents in Bedfordview from childhood well into adulthood. My dad married my mother Shreefa Shreef, decades before I was born. My mother had struggled to conceive. She was from Vryburg in the Northern Cape. Her father was a wealthy man who conducted a very successful retail business in Vryburg. My maternal grandfather was from a village called Shiverdine, in the South of India. He too came to South Africa looking for a better life. My maternal grandmother was of Malay descent.

A short while after my parents got married my dad built a shop on land, bordering a massive Black Township in Edenvale, near Oliver Tambo International Airport, which in those days was called Jan Smuts Airport. The land belonged to a kindly White Afrikaans-speaking woman whom I only knew as Mrs Kemp. The thing about her that stood out for me is that when we called on her, every month at her home in 'White' Edenvale town, to pay her the rent, she would receive us with grace and good manners and would not treat us like many White people did in those days, as inferior beings.

My father's business thrived, and he prospered. He invested in property and, together with so-called Coloured master builders, built many properties which he leased to tenants. They were well constructed out of facebrick and grew in value.

Under the then prevailing race-based legislation my dad would ordinarily have been registered

Indian, but there were apparently lapses in the registration system and he was registered as Cape Malay, assuming his mother's racial identity profile. People who were registered as Malay under the Population Registration Act were regarded as 'Coloured'.

The properties my father developed were in a Coloured Group Area, which was dictated by the Group Areas Act. He continued doing business in Edenvale where I spent all my childhood. We lived in a rudimentary house, with an outside drop toilet and had to dig holes in our very large yard into which we dumped our trash. When a hole was full it would be filled in and a new hole dug.

Our shop sold almost everything as many general dealers did in those days: from basic groceries and beads to wool, leather, dress material, guitar strings, beds, primus stoves, zinc baths, nails, bicycle parts, shoemaking tools, bags of maize meal, Dutch medicines and literally hundreds of other products.

My father's customers from the adjacent township, which was called Dindela – often referred to irreverently as Transvaal's dirtiest location, with mocking reference to the car registration letters for Edenvale which were 'TDL' – had a great deal of affection for him because of his honesty as a trader. During the time we lived in Edenvale the threat of the Group Areas Act loomed large. My dad knew we would ultimately have to make way for White housing developments. Black township residents were being relocated to Tembisa and we would soon come under threat ourselves.

My father had foreseen the eventuality and when Reiger Park was declared a Coloured Township, he acquired plots of land on which, with his regular team of master builders, he built the house we were later to live in for decades. The house was leased out over the years so as not to leave it unoccupied.

One aspect of racist National Party policy was one they had learnt from colonial predecessors, which was 'divide and rule'. Coloured people were relocated from Actonville in Benoni to make way for Indian residents. Black people in the old parts of what was later to become Reiger Park were moved out to make way for Coloured people, who came from Actonville, Germiston and other places. This was how the National Party government generated hostility between race groups. At least that was the plan.

After our house was built the envisaged hostility impinged on our family life. We faced terrible bigotry from some members of the then township management structure and from some members of the community. It is fair to say that at that time the township comprised many conservative elements, content to serve the interest of the apartheid regime. While still living in Edenvale we received anonymous telephonic threats of violence from those elements. My dad was offered laughable amounts for the house he had built. An insulting and deplorable racial epithet in relation to Indian people was liberally and unashamedly used against us.

Some members of the Reiger Park community initiated race classification proceedings against us. Their objective was to have us as a family reclassified as Indian and consequentially rejected for residence in Reiger Park. My father was regularly picked up by police and taken in to be interrogated for hours on end about his ancestry. It was a terrible time for us.

When I was in, what was then known as Standard 8, now Grade 10, in 1972, I faced the consequences of this racist antagonism very personally and starkly. I attended William Hills High School because it was at that time the closest English-medium school to Edenvale, to which I could travel by public transport. Even then it took two buses, a train ride and a 1.5 km walk, commencing at 05:30 to get there. I was once called out in assembly after the race classification proceedings had commenced and informed publicly that I did not belong in the school because I was 'Coloured'. The school had now

assumed an Indian identity. At that time people like Mrs Helen Foster and Bob Triegaardt were being made to leave as well.

To be fair my sister and I faced similar bigotry from some members of the Indian community because we could not communicate in an Indian language and because of our mixed ethnic heritage. An insulting and unacceptable racial epithet that related to the Coloured community was used against us by reactionary elements within the Indian community. Talk about irony. Or perhaps more accurately, a catch-22. My father begged the school authorities to permit me to complete the academic year. They relented and I did.

The next year, because of the intervention of Mr Abdullah Abass, the then president of the non-racial South African Rugby Union and who was also chairperson of the school board in question, I was admitted to Standard 9 at William Pescod High School in Kimberley in 1973. Uncle Doellah was married to my mother's sister. The population of Kimberley was too small to have two schools, one for Indian and one for Coloured scholars. Attempts to get me admitted to Coronationville High or Bosmont High had failed because they were at full capacity.

From the first day at William Pescod I felt I could breathe and not have to face day-to-day discrimination from either community. But having to leave home because of race did feel like painful exile. In 1974 things came to a head. We were forced to leave Edenvale because of the Group Areas Act and we moved to Reiger Park. By then, the race classification proceedings had terminated, and we retained our classification as Malays and could thus reside in a Coloured Group Area. The hostility, however, did not end. The phone threats continued and so did the paltry offers for our house.

My dad was away during the day running his other businesses. My sister Miriam and I were away at university. My sister completed her medical degree at the University of Cape Town, and I was reading law at the University of the Western Cape where I encountered Dr Allan Boesak, who was the student chaplain, and where I later became involved in student politics. As with William Pescod High, where I encountered the nicest people with whom I still have contact to this day, UWC, though a 'bush college', was a place where one encountered the bravest opponents of the apartheid regime, who made a real and substantial contribution to the struggle. It was far from ideal academically, but you felt you were enriched by the comrades around you. Many of Reiger Park's famous sons and daughters got their political and academic schooling there. Prof Jakes Gerwel taught me Afrikaans there and I made friends with truly wonderful people who accepted you as you were.

My mom, however – unlike my dad, my sister and I – remained at home. She had a warm, generous spirit and made friends easily. She made friends with Bob Triegaardt's first wife, and they became close. Two working mothers, Thelma Abrahams, and Aunt Sophie Lottering – Oom Vic Lottering's wife – asked her if they could leave their children with her to care for during the day. My mom eagerly agreed. Thelma's two children, Adele and Gregg, and Aunt Sophie's daughter Urshula were my foster siblings. To this day they cherish my mother's memory. I keep close contact with the two families and have an abiding affection for Urshula and Adele.

My mother made friends with everyone. We were integrating into the community. When I came home from UWC, after acquiring my degree, I started working for South Africa's foremost public interest law institution, the Legal Resources Centre, a natural progression from my involvement as chair of Student Legal Aid at UWC.

Soon after I started work, I saw first-hand the work that George du Plessis was doing, not only on the political front but also with the Ratepayers and Tenants Association with Aunt Ellen

Lambert and others. From time to time, I assisted in their efforts to assist, especially the poor. The first case I got involved in was that of a certain Mr Klein, who lived in the Singles and was threatened with eviction. When the LRC resisted the eviction in the high court I was introduced to Bok Jeffreys, who worked for *Beeld-Ekstra* at the time. Little did Bok, George and I know what the future had in store for us.

It was the first time that the community had easy access to free legal resources. After I qualified as an advocate, the LRC sent me to set up community advice offices in the East and West Rand. With the assistance of community organisations and churches we established advice centres in Kagiso (Frank Chikane was of assistance), Phiri (at the Catholic Church), Zola (with the assistance of the Anglican Church), Daveyton (at the Catholic Church), Duduza, Diepkloof and at St Anthony's Centre in Reiger Park. We received a grant from Alfred Teves, an engineering firm located in Dunswart, to help set up the Reiger Park office. George and Sydney du Plessis were indispensable in the establishment of that office. Sydney, or Oom Rice as he was widely known, oversaw running it. I would pay weekly visits to each advice office and dispense advice there and take cases back to the office that required further attention or litigation. I remember Oom Rice's incredible sense of humour and how often we laughed together, even in the face of great adversity.

It is fair to say that in the early days after we moved there, Reiger Park was, in general terms, a conservative community and to the right, politically, of many other urban township communities. The name of the township, one of Van Riebeeck's ships, is perhaps an indicator. Its political leadership in the past, by and large, comprised apologists for government policy who sought to distance the community from their Black counterparts in neighbouring Black communities. George du Plessis was among a handful of people who very bravely, given the times, sought to have Reiger Park align with all those who resisted apartheid and saw a common non-racial future. The use of the ugly K-word was commonplace in reactionary circles in Reiger Park.

I also became involved in the committee that ran the mosque in the old Kalamazoo. We were agitating for a mosque to be built closer to the civic centre, for easy and safe access, but met with fierce resistance from certain members of the Management Committee. Abdullah Mohamed, who served on that committee, was one of the few members of that committee who sought to assist us. Our bond with the local Muslim community grew. I attended mosque locally and spent every Ramadan there during Taraweeh prayers at night.

I recall that at the time of the taxi riots involving Gangadin and after the Indian-owned shops were torched a member of the management committee walked past our house and addressed my father, stating that he would ask people not to harm us as a family. He was not someone who was well disposed to us. I found what he had said deplorable and said so, although perhaps not emphatically enough. There were, however, more young people returning from UWC who became active in challenging existing values and who were agitating together with some church leaders for us, as a community, to identify more obviously and more stridently with the struggle against apartheid. On occasion, children had to oppose their parents for the greater good.

Also, people in the township in general, perhaps because of urbanisation, were beginning to understand that the futures of all communities in South Africa were inextricably linked. After the Labour Party split on the question of participation in the tricameral parliament and there was nationwide dissatisfaction with the decision and organisations opposed to this new development proliferated, the United Democratic Front was on the horizon. Shortly after the Labour Party decision, which George du Plessis had opposed in Eshowe where the decision was taken, Labour Party leaders embarked on a campaign to sell the idea throughout

the country. Reiger Park was one such destination.

I was newly qualified as an advocate when a meeting took place in Reiger Park organised by, among others, Jac Rabie. For years he had kept his supporters, who were plentiful, within the fold of those intent on appeasing the National Party. He had expediently and repeatedly switched between political parties. George du Plessis, urged on by student supporters, attended the meeting intending to disrupt it. He was carried into the meeting shoulder high and then he saw tough guy bouncers, who expected trouble, on the stage armed with whips and clubs. It was reported to me that mayhem ensued. George was arrested and at about 01:00 I heard a knock on my bedroom window. It was Alfred Woodington and others who asked me to see if I could procure his release at the police station.

I got dressed and arrived at the police station. I spoke to a policeman at the duty desk who thought it amusing that there was someone who was Black, standing in front of him, claiming to be an advocate. This was during a state of emergency when legal challenges were being stifled. The policemen gathered some of his colleagues around him and asked me to repeat to them that I was an advocate. They insisted on seeing my certificate of admission. Luckily, I had it with me. I had to wait for a few hours before the station commander arrived and we had a long discussion. A few hours later George was released. George's account of what had taken place at the meeting was beyond hilarious but that is a story for another day. I relished that I was the community's go-to lawyer.

The uprising of 16 June was now also regularly being commemorated in our community, largely due to Father Royce Meyers of the Anglican Church where George served on the parish council. Father Royce permitted us the use of his church on 16 June, with police helicopters hovering above. I should add that I spent a year teaching adult education class at St Anthony's to local people who had dropped out of class due to several reasons. I taught English and helped at least eight people through that subject at Grade 10 and matric level.

What we did not fully appreciate at that time was how resource-laden our community was becoming. Billy Jacobs and Tony Andrews came back from university as qualified medical doctors. Bok Jeffreys held an executive position at the Urban Foundation and had acquired managerial skills and had journalistic experience that proved invaluable. Cecil Morden qualified as an economist, Albert Links was a store manager at Woolworths, Paul Page, Henry van Wyk, Nathan Triegaardt, and others had come back from UWC as degreed teachers. Alfred Woodington was a union organiser and the community's link to the labour movement and to other communities. I was a lawyer at the community's disposal. Some of the clergy identified with us in the struggle against apartheid. Business personalities, like Danny Cassell, had become involved in resistance politics. Women in the community came back with degrees across a range of professions and were a bedrock of community development and of resistance against the apartheid regime. The working class were an incredible resource, guiding us with their wisdom and experience.

It was also a time when the Sullivan Code had been adopted, which forced American business entities in South Africa to invest in social justice programmes. The East Rand Alumni Society, which comprised men and women with drive and passion, was beginning to tap into those resources. Several of us were involved in a community trust which received grants that were used, inter alia, in the establishment of a preschool centre and cognitive development programme. These community forces and individuals were awaiting a catalyst to coalesce. It came in the form of the reintroduction of petty apartheid measures, during the late eighties, by the Conservative Party in the metropoles in which they held sway. The

Conservative Party undertook to restrict entry to the facilities at Boksburg Lake to White people. They would deny Black people entry to public parks and other facilities and would prohibit mixed gathering at social events in town.

People in Reiger Park were angry. Over decades they had contributed to industries in the area that had made Boksburg one of the affluent municipalities in the country. The local management committee came under fire and people started discussion groups. One day various groups called a meeting at St Anthony's. Thousands of us gathered on the third floor of one of the buildings. Father Stan Brennan, who was a respected figure, allowed us the use of the space. There were so many people I was afraid that the floor would not hold. There was an outpouring of emotion. People voiced their anger and their disappointment with the management committee and with the White community, not enough of whom voiced solidarity with us.

I was ultimately asked to chair that meeting, which required direction. About twenty people were nominated to form a committee to come up with a viable strategy to show that we would no longer accept being treated as second-class citizens. A popular refrain was that people were *gatvol*. A hat was passed around and thousands of rands were collected. Billy Jacobs was elected treasurer. It proved to be an inspired choice.

Media from all over the world were present. Agence France Presse, Reuters, the BBC, American networks, and others wanted to present to the world the small-mindedness of the Conservative Party and the Black resistance to it. That was how the 'Save Boksburg Committee' was formed. We had no idea how popular we would become and how effective our tactics would be. Our immediate plan was to ensure a boycott of Boksburg city centre, which was a retail hub at the time. We planned to divert our buying power and that of neighbouring Black communities and redirect it all to neighbouring towns that would be happy to welcome us. It meant that we had to find the money to fund buses to travel elsewhere. It meant asking the local taxi owners to co-operate and finding the means to incentivise them. We approached several multinational corporations for funding and were successful in raising funds beyond our most optimistic expectations.

We were scrupulous in accounting for every cent we raised and presented accounts at public meetings. Billy was brilliant in that regard. We used funds to promote buying at local shops. We would put up the capital to buy, say, chicken in bulk and supply it to local shopkeepers to sell at small margins and cheaper than the major supermarket chains. We cleared tons of chicken on the first few weekends. The chains cottoned on and choked our supply chain. We switched products, depending on who we could persuade to supply us with products. We managed to obtain the co-operation of most taxi owners but, as always, there were those who were unwilling to side with the community. We bought food parcels that we distributed without charge to poor people, especially during holiday periods, such as Christmas and Easter. We continued limited co-operation with the management committee, mainly because we were uncertain at that stage about the extent of our own political support. But our public meetings were all our own making. We invited guests to speak who were inimical to the interest of the management committee. We had Moses Mayekiso speak, Alfred Nzo's wife Regina, Archbishop Hurley, Franklin Sonn, Allan Boesak and others.

Keeping everyone on board and the community focused was a major logistical and tactical exercise.

The National Party government allowed us some space because they wanted to show up the Conservative Party and paint themselves as reasonable and willing to liberalise their outdated and deplorable racial policies. However, they had informers within the community and one Saturday,

Masjidun-Noor on Goedehoop Ave, Reiger Park (CH Morden).

while we were waiting for our people to complete their shopping at the Hyperama in Benoni, we were approached by security police who appeared to know who Bok Jeffreys and I were. We were instructed to be at security police headquarters in Benoni that afternoon. We were instructed to bring George du Plessis with us.

That afternoon Billy, Bok, Danny Cassell, Eric van Staade, George, and I went to security police headquarters in Benoni. They presented us with the pamphlets we had distributed over months. They were able to tell us precisely what we had discussed at Save Boksburg Committee meetings. They could tell us what had been said at our public meetings and who our guest speakers had been. The security police interrogated us at length about whether we had ties to the Communist Party or to the ANC in exile. They were especially interested in George and his ties to the liberation movement. George and I were interrogated about funding for the local advice office and whether we co-operated with the South African Council of Churches. In the background was a White security policeman who kept on rubbing part of his arm that must have been injured, repeatedly saying "Ek ken pyn". The message was clear. If we overstepped what they considered to be the mark, we would face consequences.

We filled the Civic Centre with every meeting that was held. As stated earlier it was a real challenge to keep interest going over a period of

a few years. It was growing to be more than just a consumer boycott movement. We were becoming a popular movement, born out of a genuine sense of grievance with a wider agenda, getting our people on board in relation to the greater struggle against apartheid. We arranged, with great media fanfare, a picnic at Boksburg Lake in defiance of the Conservative Party's segregation policy. The Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (the AWB) had stated publicly that they would evict us physically and forcefully. We arrived in busloads at the lake under full media glare. There were some hefty characters who attempted to attack us physically. The police intervened and we were ordered to leave, which we ultimately did. We had, however, made the point that we would not accept being excluded from facilities in our town.

We once organised a march, in which we were joined by local priests, in support of Lt Gregory Rockman, a policeman with a conscience who had sided with a community and faced retribution from his superiors. We also waged an anti-crime campaign in Reiger Park after a brutal attack on a young woman. The Conservative Party repeatedly spoke about the virtues, as they saw it, of keeping races apart. Their local office bearers referred to us as a backward community that required development. We mocked them and challenged them to a public debate at which everything from art, music, history, and politics would be debated. We insisted that the debate would prove who was backwards. That challenge was predictably never accepted. Our people loved it.

The break with the management committee came at long last. We had persuaded a few White people to show support. A handful joined in some of our bus rides. The Conservative Party vowed that we would never be allowed to hold a mixed social function within Boksburg itself. It was a challenge we could not resist. We contacted Colgate-Palmolive, which had its main plant a stone's throw away from the city centre. They agreed to allow us the use of their canteen to hold a meeting that would be diverse. We invited Dr Nthato Motlana as a guest speaker.

My most precious memory of that night is about what one of our elderly people said to me as we waited for one of the buses that we had organised. She was smartly dressed and asked: "My kind, gaan die Boere ons vanaand aanval?" I assured her that we had organised gate control and we would do our utmost to protect everyone. What immense trust in us and what dedication to a just cause her question showed. The meeting was swept up in a feeling that things in the country could not continue as they were. Ordinary people voiced their frustration. Many people in the audience spoke up against the management committee and against collaboration politics. The management committee was roundly condemned. Felicia Kentridge, one of the founders of the Legal Resources Centre and wife of Sir Sydney Kentridge, also attended the meeting to show support. We realised at that moment that the tide had swung. We had triumphed and the universe was righting itself. We were witnessing the demise of collaboration politics.

It was a time of romantic idealism. As a local political movement, we had been transparent and accountable. Our people had found their voice. So many people had contributed to this. There had been so much effort and pain and so much devotion. The Save Boksburg Committee was a true collective. As I reflect on it, I must say, as I have on so many public occasions, that we did not, during his lifetime, truly appreciate the pioneering efforts of George du Plessis. Georgie, as he was affectionately known, was for a long time almost a lone voice in our community against the injustices of apartheid and against collaboration politics. He gave voice to his opposition at a time when it was dangerous to do so. We all owe Georgie a debt we cannot repay. All of us who served on that committee and who have survived now recognise the immense role he played.

Ongeredigeerde transkripsie van toespraak voor Reigerpark-gemeenskap

Kamerade en vriende
Ek wil gemeenskap van Reigerpark dank se vir die eer wat my hier gegan is. Dit is die heel eerste keer dat ek die vryheid van n stad binne Suid Africa ontvang het, en dit is inderdaad n eer wat ek n ooit sal vergeet nie.

Hierdie gemeenskap het baie bygedra tot ons stryd, en vanaand kan ek sien dat die bereidskap nog steeds daar le om verder te loop in die stryd vir a nie rassige, verenigde, demokratiese Suide Afrika, waar beide man en vrou, wit en swart gelyke regte sal he.

Alle partye in die land is op die huidige oomblik besig om voorstelle te maak vir n nuwe grondwet. Die ANC het al reeds in 1955 met hierdie proses begin toe ons die vryhieds manifes voortgesit het. Op hierdie stadium het ons alreeds verklaar dat Suid Afrika aan die mense wat in hom bly behoort. Dat almal gelykheid het in terme van die wet en dat almal die reg het om die land saam te regeer.

In 1955 het ons ook erken dat die mense van ons land verskillende kulture het en dat geen kultuur of geloof onderdruk mag woord nie, maar ons het ook verklaar dat ons vas glo in een Suid Afrikkanse nasie, gebou uit die verskillende mense wat hier woon. Dit was ons beleid in die verlede, dit is steeds ons beleid en sal nog tans on beleid in die toekoms weeks.

Ek moet ook hier voorgee dat die regering nooit die mense n kans wou gun om saam te lewe nie en die huidige gronewet voostel wat hulle aanbied sit apartheid voor in n nuwe rok. Daar is baie min verskil tussen die drie kamer stelsel van PW Botha en die twee kamer stelsel van De Klerk. Albei wil die with minderheid se regte behou. Die ANC se dat ons glo dat die menseregte van elke persoon in die land behou en beskerm moet work, en, ons kan nie aanvaar dat minderheid politieke partye die reg het om die wil van die mederheid teen te stry nie. On se eenvoudig berskerm die regte van almal in die grondwet en doen dit op n gelyke basis.

The unedited transcription of Mr Nelson Mandela's speech on reception of the Reiger Park community's 'Freedom of the City' award in 1991.

After the consumer boycott ended, we continued to hold meetings on relevant issues. The culmination of our efforts came after Madiba's release. He agreed to come to Reiger Park to receive the Freedom of Boksburg,[1] from us, its formerly ignored citizens. We arranged for the internationally renowned St Dominic's drum majorettes to be in attendance. Billy arranged for the Baragwanath Choir to sing at the function. It was a euphoric time. Madiba was as usual gracious and praised the community for its efforts. It really was a glorious occasion and a fitting climax.

At our last meeting, shortly after Madiba's visit and with an impending election to establish a democratic government, we bade the community farewell as an organisation. It was an awakened community that had found its feet. It was the right time for us to depart. I continued living in Reiger Park. I was appointed a judge of the high court in 1995 and a judge of the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2000. The community continued to be my cocoon, my safe harbour.

Many graduates had moved to other residential areas for personal and professional reasons. But most continued to remain connected to the community. I moved from Reiger Park for personal reasons in 2019. I continue to stay in contact with people there. During the struggle years and thereafter, I spoke at many churches where I was warmly and fondly received and where I made even more friends. I spoke at the high school on Careers Day. I spoke at funerals and memorial functions. I was intimately involved in the construction of the new Mosque.

As I said at the beginning, the Reiger Park community enriched my life and left an indelible impression on me. I made lifelong friends, and I will always consider it home. I thank God for blessing me in this way. The community provided me with an opportunity to try to make a difference. Let me end with what was shouted by the community at the end of our public meetings: Viva Reiger Park! Viva!

November 2020

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My life story

AUDREY ANDREWS

My name is Veronica Audrey Andrews, preferably called Audrey. My family and friends used to call me Audox, short for Audrey. I was born in 1956, the eldest of seven children, five girls and two boys. I was born in Benoni and resided in Actonville and at the age of seven (in 1962) we moved to Boksburg. In Actonville Coloured, Indian and Black people lived in close proximity and in harmony. When we moved to Reiger Park/Stirtonville, the Black residents had to vacate their homes and move to Vosloorus. The Group Areas Act caused a lot of animosity.

Our home in Actonville consisted of one bedroom, a dining room and a kitchen and had a reasonably sized yard that we shared with our neighbours. Staying in this three-room house was only my parents and I, the only child at the time. I recall happy memories because I was spoiled by my parents. I attended Sub A at Actonville Primary School and completed the rest of my schooling in Reiger Park.

Our Anglican Church was a big, beautiful building at the square in Benoni, where I was baptised by Fr Moloto. He was later transferred to Potchefstroom.

My parents enrolled me at Reiger Park Primary School in 1963, where Mr C September was our principal. I do not remember much of my primary school years but what I do remember is that in my final year at primary school Mrs Hanna Wathen was my teacher. My best friend was Avril Klein; funny enough her eldest sister, Jeroma, was my first friend before I met Avril. Avril and I were bonded like glue. We were in the same class in Standard 5, now referred to as grade seven.

We did not have a public library but could fortunately make use of the school library. At that time we had no public swimming pools and spent some of our leisure time at the Cinderella dam, but not swimming, because it was too deep for us. We used to play and have picnics under the cool shade of trees and on the grass that was well trimmed.

My high school years at Oosrand were great fun. Evy (Avril), Shireen Foster and I were full of mischief. They used to call us the Three Musketeers. Evy was the one that always got us into trouble with our teachers. Mind you, she was always so terrified of being caned (punished) by the teachers. Those days corporal punishment was legal. We had very strict teachers and respected them immensely. Our favourite teacher, Mr Oscar Sithole who taught us history, did not take any nonsense from us and yet he was the one we could easily talk to. Our principal, Mr Johnny Wathen, was a softy but tried to be strict. Many of our teachers (at one point close to 80%) resided in Pretoria and used to travel with a minibus (combi) to school. Come to think of it, they were always punctual; it was very rare that they arrived late for school due to unforeseen circumstances. The three of us studied and socialised together. Shireen and I used to play hockey. We entered beauty contests. Shireen and Evy were once crowned as princesses. I was proud to be fifth.

Our new home in Reiger Park did not have the warm homely feeling like our home in Actonville. I guess maybe the people who lived there vacated it with much hurt and pain. Reiger Park was divided into different sections (areas): Galeview, where we stayed in a four-room house: two bedrooms, a kitchen and a dining room. The rooms were so small that we had problems with some of our furniture. Other areas were Reiger Park Extension 1, that had bigger houses and yards; then there was Jerusalem with its nice brick buildings, but the rooms were smaller than the Galeview ones. There were also Little Germiston, Stirtonville, the Doubles (two-roomed houses) and the Singles. I remember the Anglican and Baptist Churches. Our public transport to town was either with taxis or buses. At the time travelling by train to other towns on the Reef was very convenient.

Gangsterism had a very negative impact on our community. I still remember the gang named the Tigers and their opposition, the Lions. It was not safe to be out in the street at night because you could easily fall prey and become a casualty. They had no respect for human lives. Many young men in Reiger Park lost their lives, murdered by gangsters. In our area we had no electricity; when the sun set, we all stayed put. No one dared to go out at night because of the dangers that were looming.

Avril left us in standard 8, as she went to the teachers' training college. Shireen and I continued with school up to standard 10. Both of us went to Cape Town in 1975 to train as nurses at Groote Schuur Hospital. Distance did not keep us apart; we used to communicate with Avril telephonically and saw each other during our annual leave.

Many migrant labourers worked on the nearby mines, the East Rand Proprietary Mines (ERPM). Quite a few mineworkers died while working underground at the mines. I can just imagine what their wives and children in the rural areas had to endure. I still remember when the ERPM mines in the 1970s were busy with dynamite explosions underground: it felt like a small earthquake in our homes, the sounds of cups and saucers clattering. We learned to live with it but never got used to it. It was so frightening for our visitors who were not residing in Reiger Park. People working in the mines used to get rations: meat, vegetables and *katkop* (a special type of brown bread).

In the 1970s our parents used to vote for Jac Rabie, the main opposition party to the (Coloured) National Party. Politicians used to make all kinds of promises but often failed to keep them. During late 1988 and much of 1989 the people of Reiger Park boycotted Boksburg town; during this period it became a ghost town. We did our shopping in Benoni town and were joined by the people from Vosloorus. We left the Boksburg town for the Whites only as per their wishes. The economy of Boksburg was hit very hard for almost a whole year. Plenty buses were made available to transport us to and from Benoni. This was also a wonderful outing for some of us.

In 1981 riots erupted in Reiger Park and virtually

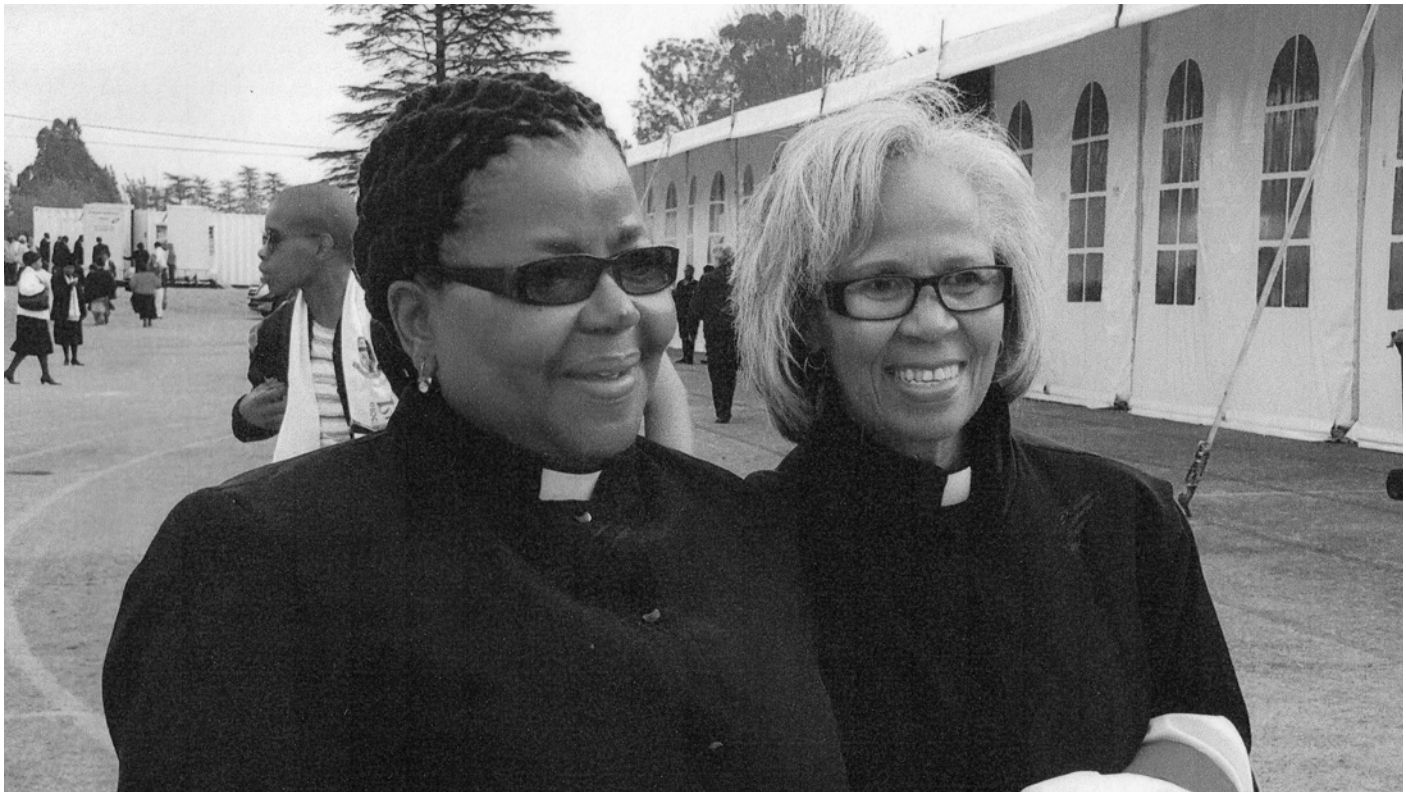
Front: Lorraine and Roshni.
Back: Wesley and Jade Wessels, Audrey Andrews and Cynthia Niewehuys (Andrews collection).

all the Indian shops were burned to the ground. Some Indian shop owners and the Indian medical doctors were given time to remove their belongings before their buildings were set alight. I recall that Abe Gangadin's taxis were boycotted. He took offence, and in the process mayhem broke out. The main reason for the unrest appeared to have centred on the shortage of housing and some unhappiness by Coloured taxi owners. The situation was really bad; shops were looted and burned. Criminals exploited the situation. They stole groceries or other valuables before the shops were burned to ashes. Things became so bad that the army was called in to assist the police. What scared me was the way the youngsters retaliated when teargas was sprayed to disperse the crowd. They climbed up the roofs, using a sling and stone, aiming it at the police (which reminded me of David against Goliath in the Bible). Many people and some of the police got hurt and were rushed to hospital. Two people were killed. This unrest lasted for a few days. Most Indian shop owners were escorted out of Reiger Park by the police with what remained of their belongings.

Boksburg had a big hospital named Boksburg-Benoni Hospital (BBH). Although it catered for patients of all races, with separate wards for Whites and people of colour ("non-whites"), only White and Black medical staff worked at BBH. Coloured medical staff in the Witwatersrand worked at Coronation Hospital in Johannesburg, which catered mainly for Coloured patients. The White sections of BBH were nice and clean with the best equipment, while the non-white sections were poorly equipped and some of the patients had to sleep on the floor because of the overfull bed occupancy.

Sports was an adventure, especially hockey, soccer, rugby and netball. Weekends were our special times to watch soccer, especially between our favourite teams Spades and Juventus, and the winning team always hosted a party.

Father Stan Brennan from the Catholic Church



The Revds Votile and Audrey Andrews at the enthronement of Rt Rev Mthetheleli Charles May as Bishop of the Highveld on 12 September 2016 (Andrews collection).

played an important role in our community. He was well known for his love and compassion for the poor, the underprivileged and the oppressed. He established a night school for those who worked during the day and wanted to liberate themselves through a better education. He was also known for caring for Aids patients. He established a hospice for them. Then there is also the Old Age Centre in the community. All these facilities are still in operation today.

After completing matric in 1974, Shireen and I applied to study nursing and were accepted in 1975 at Groote Schuur Hospital as student nurses. My first option was to become a radiologist, but because I dropped mathematics for accountancy in standard 9, I could not follow this choice. Mathematics was a prerequisite for radiology. My second option, to become a nurse, turned out to be the best choice I have ever made. I had so much compassion for my career, knowing it was what God wanted me to do. Nursing was a new and exciting experience for me. The hard work and strenuous twelve-hour shifts were totally different from being childish and a student. Now it was a completely different world for me, a grown-up world, away from home and having to make my own decisions. Getting a salary and learning how to budget was a challenge. Between all the studies and practicals, we made time for socialising when we were off duty. Our best place to visit and have fun was the University of the Western Cape where we had some friends. Friday night was disco night. Our friends would often come to visit us. We were like one big happy family, taking care of one another. The Capetonians used to call us the Josters, meaning we

are from Joburg. What I liked about Cape Town was that transport was never a problem. Hiking was the in thing and lifts were always available to transport us from point A to point B. There was also enough public transport: buses, trains, and taxis.

I studied and worked at Groote Schuur Hospital for five years and returned home as a professional nurse in 1979. In 1980 I started training at Coronation Hospital as a midwife, which I successfully completed. I worked in the maternity section in 1981. During that very year I gave birth to a baby boy. A few of us from the East Rand were traveling to work by train. This was very exhausting, especially when you worked night shifts. In 1983 I commenced working in the outpatient department. With straight shifts from seven to four, I could now spend more time with my son. Despite the many challenges that we had to face, whether it was transport, time or finances, our working conditions were satisfactory.

However, it was so unfair that we had a hospital in Boksburg but could not work there for political reasons. This annoyed me and I decided to write a letter to The Nursing Council expressing my dissatisfaction and making the point that we have a hospital in my home town but that we had to travel all the way to Johannesburg to work. The Nursing Council responded favourably to my letter. They asked our nursing manager to release us and the BBH hospital senior manager to accommodate us. At the time BBH constructed a special ward for Coloured patients known as ward 14. In 1984 a few of the Coloured nurses at Coronation Hospital were transferred to BBH.

Our Black and White colleagues at BBH received us with animosity. They were very spiteful towards us and would often make negative remarks. On the one side was the White staff and on the other the Black staff, with us fighting our little battles in the middle. We stood our ground. We knew where we came from and where we were going. For a while our small ward was like a small hospital; if you were a Coloured patient and needed admission, it was into ward 14, whether it was surgical, medical, orthopaedic, paediatric or gynaecological. We stood together and gave our patients the best care they could get. We assisted one another, taught each other where needed and showed respect to one another. Truly God was with us. Our other colleagues (brothers and sisters) soon realised that we knew our work and performed it professionally without compromising. Doctors that worked with us saw us as a team and not as the enemy. Later our Black colleagues became friendlier, and we shared our knowledge and experiences. .

A few years later we were deployed to work in other wards of the hospital. I was sent to work in the Intensive Care Unit. At the time the ICU consisted of only White nursing staff; for a while I was the only 'non-white' sister in ICU. I must say that my reception was really good. We worked well together. Later Sister Lulu Nxiba was also transferred to the ICU, a very reserved and hardworking lady. As a team we worked well together. I was an operational manager (OM) and worked in ICU for seventeen years. A few years later I was asked by our nursing director to open a medical ward. I grabbed this challenge with both hands; it was a golden opportunity. I had the knowledge and knew how to get the resources e.g., medical equipment and supplies. The nursing director and CEO provided me with the human resources, which included nursing staff, cleaners and ward administer, and within four weeks the admissions ward was operational. I worked for a few years in the medical admission ward. Later it was turned into the male medical ward due to the increase in the number of patients that we could not transfer to the overfull medical wards.

In 1999 I was called by God into the priesthood. I completed my theological studies part time. In 2010 I was ordained as a deacon and 2011 as a priest. For a few years I continued working in the hospital as a professional nurse and during my off week as an

assisting priest. In 2012 I became a Nursing Manager and worked as a night superintendent until I retired in 2016. I now continue my services as an assisting priest in the local Anglican Church.

As time changed, Reiger Park changed too. Our generation got married and many moved to the suburbs. In 1994 a new democratic government was elected with the ANC as the ruling party at a national level and apartheid came to an end. Now people could purchase homes wherever they wanted. An influx of people from the Northern Cape and Eastern Cape came to reside in Reiger Park. Within a short space of time two informal settlements appeared, and many people constructed their own shacks, often illegally.

My wish for Reiger Park is that affordable houses be built to address the problems experienced in the area, especially in the informal settlements, and for the provision of better public services such as water, sanitation and health services. I believe that this will decrease communicable diseases and other social problems.

29 January 2021

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Reiger Park
The Kirks' history

Myrna Kirk

My name is Myrna Kirk. I was born in Oberholzer near Carltonville but spent the first three years of my life in the Eastern Transvaal (Mpumalanga) where the Kirk family is from. My dad's family were farmers who lost their farms after the Group Areas Act was promulgated. My dad's grandmother was from Mozambique hence he had a Portuguese name (Hipolito) and his grandfather was from Scotland and the owner of six farms (one for each of his sons) in Malelane close to the Swaziland border. My mom's family, the Rinquests, originated from St Helena but settled in Nelspruit and Johannesburg. My parents, Rachel Rinquest and Hipolito Edmund Kirk, met in Protea Township (now part of Soweto).

Our family – mom, dad, two brothers (Trevor and Louis) and I – moved to Reiger Park in 1968 when my dad was offered a post at Reiger Park Primary School. I was four years old. In 1969 we moved into our brand-new home in Jacaranda Street, one street away from the school where I completed my primary schooling. There was only one high school and three primary schools at that time. I loved our new home because I had my own bedroom, it was close to the school, and I had lots of friends.

In retrospect, although my childhood was stable with lots of friends in a settled community, I always wished that we had stayed in Witrivier. My dad grew up on the land and was a farmer at heart. He would have much rather been farming than teaching. We spent most school holidays with my grandparents in Barberton.

When we moved into our new home there were only three other families on the street and there were still gravel roads and stand-alone streetlights. The closest shop was Ah Tong on the way to Oosrand Station. We had to walk over or around the 'dooms' (i.e the mine dumps) to get there. The other shops were 'at the top' close to the stadium and were mostly owned by Indian traders. What stands out vividly to me is the memory of all the Indian shops being destroyed after 'the riots'. That was the first time I understood what a riot was. I was

shocked and a bit scared because my dad was a taxi driver for Abe Gangadin during the school holidays.

I grew up quite protected despite the reputation that the community acquired for gangsterism. We used to go to the bioscope at the community hall (Biersaal) which was situated close to Goede Hoop Primary School. We had to run for our lives a few times when gangsters forced their way in without paying. That was the closest I ever came to experiencing gang violence.

My primary school years were particularly memorable. I remember attending the Anglican Church with my dad. It was a small stone church situated where the new Oosrand High School is today. My mother belonged to the AFM Church and her and my dad were both very active members of their respective congregations. My mother was always involved in fundraisers, especially cake sales to build the new church. I also remember attending fundraising bazaars at least once a year to build the new Anglican Church.

I belonged to the Girl Guides that was managed by Mrs Jantjies. It was one of the best experiences in my life because I started out as a Brownie and made my way all the way up to being a fully fledged Girl Guide. When I was in high school (I think Std 5 or 6) the St Anthony's Centre was completed. I attended karate lessons there with my best friend at the time, Vania Minnaar. I loved the sport but sadly never made it past yellow belt. The best thing that happened in my life in primary school was when the 'baths' – the swimming pool – opened in Reiger Park. We could 'hire' swimming costumes for 5 cents. I loved going to the baths and would sit and wait from 11:00 in the morning (weekends and holidays) for it to open at 12:30. I think it was 10 cents to get in for the day.

I also remember a great deal of after-school activities like ballet. It became evident early on that being a ballerina was not my path! What stands out vividly was the gymnastics activities that was started by Vivian Solomons. That was an amazing experience for me. We loved it and I can remember so many children participating in the sport. This continued until I was in Std 7 or 8. I also played tennis and am still saddened that there are no longer tennis courts in the community.

In the eighties we entered the stormy political years. It feels like it happened yesterday that the Boksburg Lake became the centre of the political struggle in Boksburg at the time. What I found strange as a child was that we could go close to the lake when the circus (Boswell Wilkie) was in town, but we could not go to the restaurant, sit on the benches, or feed the ducks. From what I can remember the 'struggle' over access to the lake ignited the consumer boycott where the community decided to not shop in town. I remember getting on to buses to go to Benoni to shop. The whole thing was so well organised and enjoyed the buy-in of most of the community.

Then there were also the school boycotts and strikes and run-ins with the riot police. I can vaguely remember yellow Casspirs. These were the years I started taking my academics seriously and was not fully active in the 'struggle' activities. My mother was also very wary of us getting involved in 'politics'. There were constant stories of people being locked up and abused by the police. I remember I used to go and study at St Anthony's library when there was a stay-away or boycott. I loved going to that library because it felt so luxurious to me.

I left Reiger Park in 1984 to go to UWC in Bellville and returned to teach at Oosrand High School for two and a half years. What stood out for me then was the school's rich athletics history. Sports was a big thing, not only for the school but also for the community. The principal, Dr William John Filander, was the driving force behind that culture of sports. Looking back, he was a disciplinarian with great vision. To this day I still think I learned more from him as a leader than any other 'boss' I've worked for. I left teaching in

1990 to continue my studies and never fully felt part of the community after my return.

When I visit Reiger Park today, I feel saddened by the constant decline in the community: the lack of maintenance of public facilities and amenities, the overcrowding that must put a strain on services, etc. Just like in the rest of South Africa, rampant poverty and lack of service delivery consistently eat away at the fabric of a community with such a rich history. I do not know what activities are available for children and young people today to develop their minds and bodies and to explore their talents, but I believe that – given the circumstances when I grew up there – I had access to amazing opportunities.

Being raised in Reiger Park truly shaped who I am today!

The Kirk family: Front: Hipolito and Rachel. Back: Trevor, Myrna and Louis (Kirk collection).

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The boy from Durban
He came, he saw, he stayed

Glenn Smithwick

The year was 1975 and I had just arrived from Durban to begin my training as a trainee engineering draughtsman at Dorman Long (later called Dorbyl). And, within six months of arriving in the then province of Transvaal, I relocated from Riverlea to Reiger Park. I guess some would ask what made me choose Reiger Park? The story, briefly, goes back to three positive experiences that I had in my life. Each experience involved someone from Reiger Park.

The first exposure that I had to anyone from Reiger Park was my introduction to Cecil Morden and Sharon September at a leadership training course in Kimberley in 1973. Way back, I know… This happened to be my final year of high school. My second exposure was the following year when I attended a Christian Youth Congress in Johannesburg and stayed, together with a group from Durban, at a pastor's home in Reiger Park, i.e., the same pastor with whom I eventually came to stay during my first two years in Reiger Park. Thirdly, I had the good fortune of spending a few weekends with Wayne Thompson's family, during my stay in Riverlea, as we were both trainees at Dorman Long. So, the sum of these positive experiences made my choice to move to Reiger Park an easy one. And as I reflect, the 1970s and 1980s were a time of great influx into Reiger Park from all over the country. Jobs were scarce and Transvaal was the economic hub of South Africa. People who moved from the Eastern Cape, Natal and the Free State can still be found living here today.

My move to Reiger Park was a culture shock. I was totally stunned at the sight of the mine dumps as well as the streetlights which, at that stage, felt more like 'concentration camp' lights. I had only ever seen such lights, that towered way above the area, in movies of the concentration camps of World War II. In a sense these eyesores are symbolic of the fact that many negative things in Reiger Park have been starkly visible to the exclusion of some of its hidden beauties and success stories. Thankfully, I did not allow the stark visual realities of either the mine dumps or the 'concentration camp' lights to

become my final assessment of Reiger Park. Frankly speaking, aside from these challenging features, the area had many of the same challenges found in poorer, so-called Coloured, communities: gangs, high unemployment, alcohol abuse, and now drugs.

As an aside, my exposure to a Boksburg winter added to my shock. I experienced my first proper winter in Reiger Park, and after the first night, I swore I was going to die from the cold. Remember that I had just relocated from Durban where the winter temperatures are like springtime in Boksburg. Unfortunately, not knowing how cold it would get at night, I had not asked the family where I was boarding for an extra blanket. That first night I even remember putting my overcoat over the blankets to try and keep me warm. While I have made peace with Gauteng winters, I still do not like them.

Since then I have learned that Reiger Park has hidden beauty that cannot always be perceived merely by what your eyes see, or your ears hear. As a serious Christian I would have to say that one of those hidden treasures was, and still is, its diverse and vibrant Christian community. Back then, many of the independent churches were lively and involved, meeting in any space that would accommodate worshippers. But that never got them down. Whether it was a classroom in one of the local schools, or a space in the Civic Centre, these churches would worship! Worship helped ease the pain and brutality of life and apartheid.

Not only did many churches worship in school halls and classrooms, but the church that I am a member of, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (abbreviated as SDA church and sometimes mistakenly, and quite humorously, called 'The Seven Days'), had the good fortune and blessing of renting the local Methodist Church for Saturday services for several years in the mid-1980s. At that stage many churches had no problem with their youth groups joining each other for spiritual and social get-togethers. As I think back, it was during the days of apartheid's deepest segregation that churches found greater community with each other, and the denominational lines were blurred.

In the late 70s our church also worshipped in a classroom at Oosrand High School. We were very fortunate back then to have had Pastor Johann Abrahams as our local pastor. I say this because he had a passion for youth and was open to the idea of interacting with other Christian youth groups. In fact, I was pleasantly surprised to find almost fifty percent of the youth membership of the local SDA youth were not members of our church. Interestingly, there are one or two pastors, in other independent charismatic churches, that back then were part of our church's Youth Club. I can distinctly remember our youth joining with the AFM Church's Youth, and even our choir singing in the Ebenezer Church.

Back in the late 1970s and early 1980s I had a perception (untested, I must admit) that even the gangs had a certain level of respect for Christian youth. I say this as I can remember walking home late on a Saturday night with my brother-in-law, Jannie Mouers, from visiting the two sisters we were dating, and even though we would cross gang-infested parts of Reiger Park, we never felt threatened.

Joining the Church and its youth was a major factor in who and what I have become today. I was fortunate on two levels. On one level, this was a phase in the church's history when the youth of the church were active and involved in many things, from social to sporting activities. Those were the days, at the advent of television in South Africa, when church youth clubs provided a much-needed source of wholesome recreation for youth, like me, in their late teens and early twenties. From the volleyball club and the Sunday morning swimming club to the occasional soccer competitions, there was always enough to keep one busy and involved. I even remember how we walked from Reiger Park to Heidelberg. This was an experience that helped me discover muscles I did not know I had.

The Smithwick family: Front: Delphine with her grandson Caleb, Glenn with his granddaughter Taznay Marillier. Back: Leezanne (son Byron's wife), Christopher Young (daughter Lyndell's husband), Lyndell, Byron, Leola, Zaine Marillier (daughter Leola's husband) (Smithwick collection).

Looking back, I realise that the church threw me, an inexperienced 20-year-old, into the deep end of ministry, 'boots and all'. They were crazy enough to appoint me as a youth leader, an elder, the treasurer and a preacher, all at the same time. I did not know it then, but these 'thrown-in-the-deep-end' experiences were preparing me for my present calling as an evangelist. I believe that these smaller churches in Reiger Park were the 'nurseries': training grounds for many of our local preachers. Many churches had a formal pastor who was not available to preach at their church every week, which would force, out of necessity, many of us to take leading roles in our churches, including teaching and preaching. I believe that the development and growth of the many local lay preachers in Reiger Park can be attributed to these churches with either no trained pastors, or pastors who had more than one church to service. The fact that this shy, introverted 'boytjie' from 'Durbs' would one day become a public speaker is hard to fathom, but that is how church life in Reiger Park shaped me.

There are people who believe in fate or 'karma'. Whatever your view, as a Christian, I saw the providence of God in my training, in that the very next pastor to be appointed to our church had a passion for training lay pastors, i.e., those who have not been to seminary. So along came Pastor Harold

Coombs, in the late 1970s. I now have a sense that God was superintending the upskilling, not only of me, but also of other youth who wanted to learn how to preach and lead effectively.

A hidden benefit to my relocation to Reiger Park was learning Afrikaans. But eish, what a challenge that proved to be! I remember having a conversation in Afrikaans with some friends, and when they spoke about *swaartekrag* (gravity) I thought they were speaking about 'Black Power'! This boy from Durban learnt that it is not only ok to speak Afrikaans, but a downright advantage to learn to appreciate humour in such an expressive language. Who can forget the television comedies *Vetkoekpaleis* and *Nommer Asseblief?*

Now if you know Reiger Park, then you'll know certain sections have distinctive names e.g., Galeview, Little Germiston, Popcorn Valley, Fast Move, Singles and Doubles, Opmekaar, MM (some say Mooi Meisies), etc. Yes, I pulled a 'fast move' to go from 'single' to 'double' to get my 'mooi meisie!' I played it smooth and fast to find the 'mooi meisie', who would become my wife: Delphine Seedat. Little did I know how my marriage to this passionate, energetic woman from Reiger Park would take my life in another direction.

Very soon after our marriage Delphine, known by many as Nessa and by others as Vanessa, joined the local Meals on Wheels organisation. At that time she was one of the youngest volunteers in Reiger Park Meals on Wheels, known also by its abbreviation MOW. For those who have not encountered this welfare organisation, it provides a warm meal (currently twice a week) to the most destitute in our communities. In Reiger Park they currently serve roughly nine thousand meals a month. Tragically, in 2020, with the corona virus lockdowns, the Meals on Wheels programme revealed to us how many people in Reiger Park are one salary away from food insecurity. Thankfully, for some, the Meals on Wheels programme and other welfare organisations were there to help.

Coupled with the meals served, it is also a luncheon club, where seniors of all economic backgrounds come together once a week for social and spiritual interaction as well as a meal. During bygone years they would do arts and crafts, which they would sell to raise funds. Nessa saw this as a grand opportunity for mainly grannies and great grandmothers to leave the grandchildren for a while, get dressed up and share time with old friends. It gave them a moment to forget their cares and be among friends again. These Senior Citizen Club (formally known as Luncheon Club) activities provided a much-needed distraction from the normal 'grind' of life for these grandmothers, who would often function as caregivers to their grandchildren. These Club days were a time to dress up and go out, to rub shoulders with their peers, laugh, sing and pray, and share a meal together. A highlight of their year was always the year-end concert, in which these seniors (mainly ladies) would entertain the crowd with songs, skits, poems and much more.

Roughly 25 years ago this Luncheon Club expanded its social activities and, on Nessa's watch, the Club travelled on vacation to many places locally and internationally. It impacted me greatly as I have this travel itch which, in hindsight, would not have been scratched had I not stuck around in Reiger Park. Now who would have thought the 'Coloureds' from Reiger Park would become seasoned world travellers! It started small with travel by train. Those were the days when train travel was not only inexpensive, but comfortable and true value-for-money, especially at Senior Citizen rates! There were numerous trips to Durban, KwaZulu-Natal South Coast, Cape Town, as well as Badplaas and Bela Bela (then known as Warmbaths or Warmbad). The most hectic trip that comes to mind was the trip with 120 travellers (including travellers from other parts of Gauteng who also travelled with the 'travel' club from Reiger Park) to Cape Town.

While the Club would raise funds through various ventures, each senior was ultimately

responsible for covering her own fare. These domestic holidays provided a much-needed break from their day-to-day activities. And these holidays also gave seniors, many who did not have their own cars, an opportunity to visit many interesting places in South Africa more easily and comfortably and, many times, with an experienced tour guide. As a result of the Luncheon Club, the holidays and the Meals on Wheels, friendships were developed that lasted decades. The interesting thing from the Meals on Wheels and Club activities is that my wife is more easily identified in Reiger Park than I am. People would refer to me as 'Nessa se man'! This was in some ways 'payback' for the fact that in some churches where I preached or conducted funerals or weddings, Delphine was sometimes referred to as 'Mrs Glenn'.

But I digress; back to the seniors' holidays. The annual local holidays resulted in very interesting and unexpected developments. Since 2013 the group, which now included non-Club members as well – Reiger Park residents and beyond – began to take holidays to international destinations. The first was a trip to Namibia in 2013, which proved stressful yet adventurous, despite the efforts of a shady South African travel agent. That trip could have spelled the beginning of the end of the Club's interest in foreign travel. But fortunately, it did not. Sadly, this travel agent had taken money meant for all the travel arrangements, such as hotel accommodation etc., and had not paid for these in advance. You can imagine the chaos. Fortunately, Nessa had earned the respect and trust of her club members, who knew from experience the level of her competence and integrity. This confirmed the truth that 'your reputation precedes you' and, with that, the bug for international travel had bitten the club from Reiger Park!

Next would be a trip to the exotic island of Mauritius, where we had around forty-six travellers. We spent six glorious days in Mauritius, visiting most of the tourist attractions. Since these international trips attracted many younger travellers, and due to the high costs, the idea of trying to subsidise the travellers with fundraising events was not followed. The next year we travelled to Thailand for a ten-day holiday; three days of shopping and touring in chaotic Bangkok, and seven days on the idyllic island of Phuket. The group did a boat trip to James Bond island, and went to the famous FantaSea show, which included a buffet supper in a three thousand-seat restaurant! For the twenty-four travellers this was an interesting exposure to one of the oldest cultures in South-East Asia. The very next year over forty of us did a four-day cruise on the *Sinfonia*, from Durban to the Portuguese islands. However, the most memorable trip to date was the whirlwind 2019 trip to India and Dubai. The group of forty-four spent seven days in northern India, visiting many tourist sites, among them the Taj Mahal. We visited amazing forts and palaces and were exposed to the rich culture and cuisine of India. I think that many of us learned to appreciate the comparative level of infrastructure of South Africa, despite our local challenges. From Delhi we flew to Dubai, which was a major contrast with India. From the 124th floor of the Burj Khalifa, to a desert safari, Dubai proved to be more than we had hoped for!

Many of those who travelled with the Reiger Park club cannot stop talking about the exciting, exotic and economical travel experiences. With all these trips what has impressed both Nessa and me has been the fact that seniors, who may be living in very ordinary houses and driving ordinary cars and some with no cars, would save up towards these trips that added tremendous value to their lives. We believe that the memories that they carried from these trips, as well as the photos, would be lifelong reminders of a life, not only well-lived, but money well spent, and this all from a small Reiger Park seniors club that started with short local travel trips. These trips certainly added value to my life and satisfied this travel itch in the boy from Durban, now resident in Reiger Park.

Senior Citizens' Club: Front: Johanna Schubert (in wheelchair), Theresa Fortuin, Hilda Jooste and Delphine Smithwick. Back: Liz Jacobs, Maha Few, Anne Joko, Lilly Hermanus, Lorna Van der Westhuizen, Eva Hank, Karenza Botha, Erica Jacobs, Vena Pachai, Esmé Human, Cecilia Martins, Stephanie Peter, Margaret Narasoo, Harmony Petersen, Hendrika Baardtman, Generosa Crawford, Elaine Opperman, Maria Chanchu and Frieda Volmink (Smithwick collection).

Looking back over the years I have spent in Reiger Park has allowed me to appreciate the community. I have seen the best and worst of our community. Let me begin with the worst. Several years ago, somewhere in the 1980s, I believe, we saw the burning down and looting of Indian businesses in Reiger Park. This was a very sad chapter in our community's history, for a few reasons. Firstly, I believe that this was a betrayal of a long, positive history of good neighbourliness, that particularly our parents and grandparents had enjoyed with the Indian community. They had lived as neighbours, alongside Indian neighbours, in old Stirtonville, in Germiston, and had schooled at William Hills High School in Actonville, today an Indian area, during the apartheid years. Secondly, many of us were disgusted and appalled at how middle-income families would not just condone, but encourage their children in the looting of these Indian-owned shops. A second major episode that brought great sadness to those of us who had experienced the best that Reiger Park has to offer, was the xenophobia that suddenly exploded in 2008. A small glimmer of hope was that people from this same community stepped forward to help and protect the foreigners.

Fortunately, on the positive side, Reiger Park has much to be proud of. This community has produced many academic success stories, and many sporting heroes. And over the years I was pleased to see many of these heroes plough something back into the community. In a community riddled with drugs, gangs and crime, where the criminals are many times the heroes, there needs to be more celebration of that which is positive and uplifting, more people that our youth can model their lives after.

One such chapter in the history of our community was the strategic effort put in by the East Rand Alumni, back in the late 1980s and early 1990s. They arranged what I believe was a 'Career Week' for the high school students at that time. But

this one was different. They brought in local people from very different careers and, apart from some motivational presentations, we were each assigned a classroom to which the students could come for a formal introduction to and explanation of what our jobs entailed, and how they, as students, could get into that career. This was great fun for me, as I was an engineering draughtsman back then, and engineering design had just begun to move into the computer space. I must admit that of those that attended my sessions, I was pleased to find a few from Reiger Park who had moved towards study and employment in engineering design. And overall, I believe that this was one of the best things that could have been done for high school students who were still undecided about the career path to follow. I am sure there have been many other projects, just as noteworthy, but I could speak of this one as I had experienced it first-hand. In the past few years we also had glimpses of our community's potential with 'Re-imagine Reiger Park', driven by The Pacific Institute and Sam Alexander. This is an initiative that took several teachers and leaders through the 'Investment in Excellence' programme at no cost to the community. While we may not yet have seen the fruits of those efforts, I believe that the seeds sown will produce a harvest.

Reiger Park… what is it about this place? I am not too sure… the experiences? The people? But as I ponder that question, I am reminded of a sweet that I once ate. It was hard on the outside, but soft on the inside. That just about describes Reiger Park for me. At times crude and rough and in your face, but beneath that exterior are its people. Some of them are the salt of the earth. It was in this community that I would find my Christian experience enriched beyond measure, my horizons widened through travel, my sense of belonging anchored, the woman I love, my family and more challenges to grow. In this community I would find the people that would challenge me to be the best 'me' that I could become. In Reiger Park I formed some of the deepest bonds of friendship; friendships that have stood the test of time.

7 January 2021

19

Soccer in Reiger Park and on the East Rand

Errol Fortuin

The history

We have the fondest memories of the formation of what was called the Union of Central Transvaal.[1]

Much of the soccer union's formation started where we came from: Modderfontein, Payneville and Benoni. Germiston was recognised but not yet established. Many played on school level in Benoni, Modderfontein and Gishen on school grounds.

Soccer was in our blood and culture. It was what kept our community together. We experienced oneness, *samehorigheid,* as Leonard Plaatjies would call it. This was how the union would find its origin and be established.

From Payneville in Springs would come Royal Hearts and Aces (born from the Adolph and Williams families). Families were the foundation of almost all teams of this era. Even mothers and grannies would be involved in washing and preparing team outfits for upcoming weekend games. This is part of the great respect in our communities. This was the spirit of the time we grew up in; everyone was involved.

In 1964 we were moved to Reiger Park because of the Group Areas Act. Many were unsettled because of this great discomfort, i.e., people from Germiston, Alexandra, Benoni, Edenvale. It was the soccer leadership and teams that kept the core of our communities.

Our midweek soccer meetings had a flavour of their own. It was time for fellowship and funny team talk. It was also a time to share your view. I remember so clearly how difficult it was to pay your fine of *'n tiekie*, which was equivalent to two and a half cents, if you were late. These meetings were something memorable.

Honour must be given to the leaders that formed and established these platforms: WJ Clements (chairman of the Union), Ernie Smith (secretary), Dougie Anderson (treasurer), and Kenny Salie (chairman of the Central District). Other leaders included Mr G Peffer, Jacky Thompson and Edgar Hansrod. This was what kept us together: strong leadership. As we are aware, everything hangs and falls on leadership.

The South African Games during the 1960s and 1970s

The South African Games, also referred to as the South African Open (International) Games, was a multi-sport event held in South Africa during the 1960s and 1970s, following the country's gradual isolation from all international sporting events.

The first South African Games was held in 1964; for Whites from 29 February to 9 March and for Blacks from 24 April to 10 May. In March 1969 the second South African Open Games were held in Bloemfontein. Several international sports persons attended but many boycotted the event. In 1970 the International Olympic Committee (IOC) expelled the South African National Olympic Committee (SANOC).[2]

The Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) first suspended the Football Association of South Africa (FASA) in 1961. FASA included some black players within its structure. African, Indian, and Coloured officials in the anti-apartheid South African Soccer Federation (SASF) subsequently formed the anti-racist professional South African Soccer League (SASL).[3]

FIFA president Stanley Rous got FASA temporarily reinstated in 1963, but FASA was again suspended in 1964. It was finally expelled from FIFA in 1976.

On 26 January 1973 FIFA announced that it will allow foreign amateur football teams to participate in the South African Games to be held in March-April 1973 in Pretoria. The organisers promised that Black players, including multi-racial teams, and spectators would be allowed. However, on 11 February 1973 FIFA withdrew this special permission when it becomes clear that FASA was planning separate teams for different race groups.[4] "The organisers (then) staged a four-team soccer tournament for the four South African race groups; the Whites scored a 4–0 upset over the Blacks in the final, while the Coloureds beat the Indians in the third-place playoff by the same score."[5]

Teams that were formed and participated in this league were Aces, Arabians, Blackburn, Boksburg United, Callies, Crusaders, Naughty Boys, Orientals, Pirates, Pixie, Rosebuds, Royal Hearts, Spades and Yorkshires. With the wealth of talent new teams would be born, like Charlton, Guild, Juventus, Manchester, Stoke City and Sun United. Stoke City was a team made up of young athletes from the 1974 Oosrand High School team who later went on to play in the Benoni league where they were well received. They had many achievements and won many titles. This team was managed by Roland Filander and Uncle Lionel Swart, with Teno Meyer as coach/player. What stood out about all Boksburg teams were their fans. Wherever they would play, their fans followed and supported them.

Managers of all these teams were men whose hearts were driven by excellence and pride.

How can we forget Oom Sakkie Swarts and Oom Piet Fortuin (Spades), Mr Lyons (Pirates, which was started on the mines), Mr Shapiro (Toppa – Callies), Oom Pieter Magerman (Pixie), Oom Fox (Boksburg United), Oom Mike of the driving school (Crusaders), Oom Albert (Arabians), and Oom Lallie van Staden (Blackburn)?

From these leagues great events were born. Soccer tournaments and especially Easter Tournaments were the highlights. Because of their talent some of our teams were invited to play in East London, Port Elizabeth, Queenstown, etc. These tournaments were difficult, but memorable. The competition was tough. One unforgettable game was Spades vs Pirates. This final was played three times to determine the winner.

Of the players that was produced during this time were Dougie Anderson, Bovu, Leslie Champion, Edmund Daniels, Aubrey du Plessis, Mervyn Fynn, John Hartman, Killa, Elroy Langson, Teno Meyer, Ronald Minnie, Godfrey Noble, Roger Petersen, Leonard Plaatjies, Pro,

Percy Sauls, Bernard Scharneck, Les Theron, Oom Tokkie (Winston Magerman), Danville (Ghundie) Usher, and Tarzan (Ernest) Usher. Some of the exceptional players who went on to show their talent elsewhere were Claude Black (Springs), Philip (Pele) Brooks (Pixie, later Blackburn), Edmund (Maglobes) Daniels (played for Westham United in England via the Coloured Corps), Gava Ellis (Pirates Boksburg, and on his way to England was approached by Motherwell in Durban), Bobby Fisher (Springs), Albert (Taaitjie) Johanneson (Germiston Callies and went on to play for the first division team Leeds in England), Vicky Oliphant (Blackpool, later Manchester), and Vernon Petersen (Callies, later played for Bosmont Chelsea). This was the quality of soccer players among us. Reiger Park was a haven of talent, beauty, pride, and competition. There are countless names that have not been mentioned here.

During the 1973 South African Open (International) Games a few football players from Reiger Park, e.g., Godfrey Noble (Gorra), John Hartman and Teno Meyer played for the Coloured football team.

What happened after 1994

In a time supposedly for South Africa to become united, the 'Coloureds' received a raw deal. The soccer organisation for Boksburg and Central, SAFA, was left behind and the decline of soccer in Reiger Park was imminent. The transition was simply not good. Boksburg and Central was a great organisation with both senior and junior teams, even starting with under 9.

Men like Donny Gilmore were leading but things did not turn out well for our area. Only a few of those glorious teams remain with almost no hope for our young people as far as community building is concerned. When we grew up, we played on gravel, and later our fields were upgraded to be almost the best on the East Rand.

Ernest 'Tarzan' Usher, in his heyday an outstanding Spades FC soccer player. In later life he became a senior Science teacher and school principal.

The stadium was named after the respected President and Chairman of the Union in Reiger Park, Mr WJ Clements. Presently it is vandalised: floodlights, lights on the stand, electricity boxes and cables have been stolen. Things have changed so much; like Scripture says, "the gold has become dim."

November 2020

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’n Oorsig van my lewe: Herschel en Reigerpark

Gert Booysen

My naam is Joseph Gert Booysen. Ek is ’n geordende pastoor van die Apostoliese Geloofsending van SA en het my teologiese studies aan die AGS Teologiese Seminarium te Auckland Park voltooi. Ek is ook ’n huweliksbevestiger geregistreer by die Departement van Binnelandse Sake.

Ek is gebore in die ou BBH, die Boksburg-Benoni Hospitaal, vandag die Tambo Gedenkhospitaal. Behalwe my ouers, het my gesin uit vyf broers en een suster bestaan. My oudste broer Reynold, my pa se voorkind, het in Jeffreysbaai gewoon. Ons kom oorspronklik uit Putfontein, ’n nedersetting binne die Benoni dorpsgebied, my pa se plek van herkoms. Naburige nedersettings was onder andere Sesfontein en Modderfontein, waar my pa sy laerskoolloopbaan begin het. Vanaf Putfontein verhuis ons gesin na Actonville, Benoni, en daarvandaan, soos deur my ouers vertel, in 1964 na Stirtonville as gevolg van die Groepsgebiedewet.

Die stamboom aan my pa se kant is redelik vaag. Sy pa John sterf op ’n jeugdige ouderdom aan myntering en sy ma Margaret in 1968. Ek het die voorreg gehad om ouma Margaret se ma, ouma Rabie, se persoonskaart te sien.

My matriargale stamboom kan tot by my oupa- en oumagrootjie nagespoor word. Oupagrootjie Arend Lottering was Hollands en kom oorspronklik van Distrik Ses in die Kaap. Hy het in die 1880’s in Aartappelhoek, ’n klein deel van Herschel beland, waar hy vermoedelik sy vrou ontmoet het. Oumagrootjie was Xhosa. Haar naam was Dora en drie geslagte na haar deel hierdie naam. Slegs die vierde geslag Dora leef vandag nog. My oupa, Hendrik Tata Lottering, is in 1908 op Aartappelhoek gebore. Hierdie streek het vir ons voorouers ’n toevlugsoord geword nadat die Britse Setlaars hulle daar gevestig het. Daar was ’n Britse nedersetting genaamd New England waar ons voorouers gewerk het. Ironies genoeg was deel van hul werk om draad te span rondom die groot plase wat aan die Britte toegeken is. Hierdie plase is bewerk met ingevoerde saad en grootskaalse landboubedrywighede het ontwikkel. Skaapboerdery en die gepaardgaande

wolbedryf het werk aan skaapskeerders verskaf. Ons grootouers het sowat tien sjielings per maand verdien wat aangevul is met melk, mieliemeel en vleis.

My kennis van die geskiedenis van Herschel het ek by my ma en haar tydgenote gehoor. Die bruin gemeenskap in die omgewing was redelik groot. Die Lotterings, my grootouers, en De Klerks het op Aartappelhoek gewoon waar my oupa die titel van grootoom gehad het. In Bultfontein het die Adamse, Hepkins, Klaasens, Maarmans, Normans, Ruiterse, Smiths en Steenkamps gewoon. In Pelindaba naby Bultfontein het 'n Engelsman genaamd Webb 'n winkel gehad. In Sterkspruit, 'n dorpsgebied, het die Fletchers, Goeiemans, Jansens en Normans gewoon. In Dulsiesnek was die oorgrote meerderheid inwoners die Ruiterse. Hier was ook 'n skool, St. Michael's, gebou deur die Britse Setlaars, wat deur die omgewing se leerders bygewoon is. In Spaansrietfontein het die De Netts, Du Plessis's, Ruiterse en Volminks gewoon. Op die grens met Lesotho, by Telle Bridge, het 'n deel van die Menierse gewoon. Die Smith- familie het in Mkunyaso gewoon. In Lady Grey waar my ouma Marie Pieterse gebore is, het die Abelse, Adolphs, Alexanders, De Wee's, Fluskse, Jansens, Le Fleurs, Odendaals, Pienaars, Scharnecks, Therons, Van der Walts en Van Heerdens gewoon. Die Stein- familie was van Lampiesdraai. In die plek genaamd Kotie het die Jansens, Smiths en Swanepoels gewoon het. Die Jouberts het in Panna gewoon. Al hierdie families, klein en groot, mans en vrouens, het goeie deugde en 'n sterk werketiek gehad. Die mans was sterk en het kieries gedra. Die Here help jou indien jy met een van hulle slaags sou raak!

'n Handjievol Xhosas was op al hierdie plekke woonagtig. Daar was 'n baie goeie verhouding tussen die verskillende rasse. Die mense, waaronder my ouers en grootouers, het vlot Xhosa en Sotho gepraat. Sotho is ook gebesig, omdat Telle Bridge op die grens met Lesotho was.

Die kinders van hierdie gebied het tot standerd ses op Spaansrietfontein skoolgegaan waarna die oorgrote meerderheid gaan werk het. Die hoof van die skool op Spaansrietfontein was Ronnie Jansen, wat 'n groot aanhang gehad het. Elke onderwyser is "Meester" genoem en het geweldige respek afgedwing. Vroedvrouens soos ouma Kiekie Ruiters het babas in die wêreld help bring. Daar was selfs verpleegsters met slegs standerd 6 agter hul naam. Oom Piet Ruiters was die gesaghebbende van Spaansrietfontein wat geskille moes besleg. Wanneer een van die partye aan die pen moes ry, is so 'n persoon met 'n skaap of bok beboet. Na sy pa se aftrede het sy seun, M Fries Ruiters hierdie rol oorgeneem. Wanneer daar nie tot 'n vergelyk kon kom nie, is die saak na die laer hof op Sterkspruit verwys.

'n Groot aantal families is in 1969 uit Herschel as gevolg van die Suid-Afrikaanse regering en Kaizer Matanzima se apartheidstrategie om hierdie gebied deel van die Transkei-bantoestan te maak. In daardie tyd het die invloedryke M Fries Ruiters verdwyn. Daar is vermoed dat hy dreigende besoeke van Kaizer Matanzima se manne ontvang het. Matanzima wou hê dat die bruin mense hulle persoonskaarte moes prysgee in ruil vir die dompas. Die bruin mense moes ook hulle seuns inisiasieskool toe stuur om besny te word. So 'n seun is 'n *makwenkwe* genoem. Daar is ook skielik 'n tipe belasting op die bruin mense se diere gehef. Dit is in hierdie tyd dat Ronnie Jansen, die hoof van die skool op Spaansrietfontein, ook die hasepad gekies het en as gevolg daarvan het die skool erg gely. Families het die gebied begin verlaat en hulle in Eersterivier en Elsiesrivier in die Kaap gaan vestig. Ander is Burgersdorp, Venterstad, King William's Town, Oos-Londen, Bloemfontein, en Thaba Phatswa in Thaba Nchu toe.

Daar het nog enkele families agtergebly. Mnr. Phillip Sanders ('n lid van die Verenigde Kleurlingraad) het later verneem na hierdie oorblywende families se lot en die owerhede genader. Oupa Sipperson Norman en Masbuthi is gestuur om met die oorblywende families te

beraadslag oor die moontlikheid om hulle op Sandersville (Heilbron) in die Vrystaat te gaan vestig. Hierdie families is toe bygestaan met hul verhuising na Sandersville. In hierdie tyd het die meeste van die Herschelliete in Reigerpark aansoek gedoen vir behuising in Sandersville. Tog het hulle in Transvaal (vandag Gauteng) bly werk terwyl hulle vrouens en kinders op Sandersville gewoon het.

Daar is vandag nog ’n paar bruin families in die Herschelstreek woonagtig. Dit is duidelik dat die bruin mense van die Herschelomgewing weens apartheidspolitiek van hul geboortegrond verwyder is. Die area waar hulle gewoon het, het die potensiaal gehad om van hulle groot plaasboere te maak. Die geskiedenis van Distrik Ses, Herschel en baie ander gebiede waar bruin gemeenskappe ontwortel is, laat ’n wrang smaak na. Dit is jammer dat die redelike stem van manne soos die ontslape Madiba oor hierdie kwessie en die lot van die mense van Herschel nooit gehoor is nie.

Ek het nog altyd ’n begeerte gehad om my gesin na Aartappelhoek te neem. My hoop is dat ek toegelaat sal word om sekere dinge vir my vrou, kinders en kleinkinders te wys. Herschel was vir my as kind ’n klein paradys. In 1964 en 1965 het ek op my matriargale grootouers se plaas op Herschel gewoon. Ek was maar net vier jaar oud, maar onthou die vrede wat daar geheers het. Daar was ’n heilsaamheid wat jy nie met geld kon koop nie. Daar was ’n rivier waar Ouma twee keer per week haar wasgoed gaan was en dit dan op die skoon, gladde klippe uitgesprei het om droog te word. Kos, vleis en vrugte was in oorvloed. Oupa het met koring, mielies, beeste, pluimvee en vrugte geboer. Die plaas het ’n rondawel en ’n vierkantige grasdakwoning gehad, met ’n vuurherd tussen hierdie twee wonings waar Ouma se werksaamhede op ’n daaglikse basis begin en geëindig het. Sy het haar vloere gereeld met beesmis gesmeer. In die warm someraande het ons op die veranda geslaap.

Die groot berg op die agtergrond het ’n krans gehad wat Oupa met ’n houtheining en hek toegemaak het. Hierin kon plus-minus 20 beeste beskerming teen die ysige Oos-Kaapse weer vind. Dit was juis onder hierdie krans waar vleis geberg is. Ouma het dit ook gebruik vir haar room en jellie om te set. Uit dieselfde berg het vars water in ’n fontein opgewel. Oupa het baie hard van sonsopkoms tot sonsondergang gewerk: hy het sy lande met ploeg en osse bewerk en ook sy eie mielies en graan met meulstene gemaal. Elke oggend het een van sy twee ouer seuns die koeie gemelk. Die ander vier seuns moes die res van die beeste na weivelde naby die rivier neem.

Aan die einde van die maand is Ouma en Oupa en van die groter seuns per donkiekar dorp toe om voorraad en kruideniersware te koop. Hulle het op Sterkspruit oornag en dan die volgende dag teruggekeer. Dit was dan ook die eerste en enigste dag van die maand dat ons kinders lekkergoed kon geniet! Ek sien nog duidelik in my geestesoog hoe Ouma die ou geldjie eers in haar sakdoek vasknoop en dan verder vasspeld aan haar bors. Te kostelik.

Benewens my twee jaar as tjokker op die plaas het ons gesin elke jaareinde daar gaan vakansie hou, totdat dit in 1970 ten einde geloop het. Die rede hiervoor is die Groepsgebiedewet, wat my grootouers van hulle grond en alles op die plaas ontneem het. Sal ons ooit vergoeding kry vir ons oupagrootjie se plaas, wat hy met harde werk gevestig het nadat hy as trekarbeider uit die Kaapkolonie weg is? Hierdie stukkie paradys wat hy in die laat 19de eeu begin en toe aan sy seun Hendrik oorgelewer het, het oupa Hendrik se trots geword en met sy harde werk het hierdie plek in waarde toegeneem.

Na my twee jaar op Herschel het ek in Galeview in Stirtonville grootgeword, reg in die hart van die woonbuurt. Oorkant ons huis was die kafee en slaghuis van oom Douglas Cassell, wat vandag nog bestaan. Later is daar ’n droogskoonmaker opgerig wat Princess Droog-

Booysen-gesin: Eloise Gomez (geb. Booysen), Gert, Bronwyn Booysen, Louisa (geb. Fortuin) en Algee (Booysen-versameling).

skoonmaker geheet het. Aan die agterkant van hierdie besighede, in Rotarystraat, was daar 'n string kleinhandelaars van Asiatiese afkoms. Daar was Kort en Lang Nanabhay; Kismet; Karpal; Kalian; Moolas; Johnny, 'n besigheidsman van Sjinese herkoms en sy ma, aunt Ellen; Bhams; Moosa, tot by Loonats. Oorkant die pad, reg langs die sekondêre skool, was die Gangadins in die huurmotorbedryf. Op hierdie perseel was daar ook kamers wat aan gesinne verhuur is. Van die Gangadins se familie, die Makhadushe, het dieselfde opset aan die ander kant van Kort Nanabhay gehad.

Daar was ook ander winkels binne 'n fort-opset langs die ou Biersaal. Hierdie winkels is bedryf deur oom Davey Fransch, oom Slabs Cochrane en oom Massa. Dit was die dae van die *family size* koeldrank Marvel Orange, Ginger Beer en Pepsi. Die Biersaal was 'n kenmerkende baken in die gebied toe ons ingetrek het. Daar was 'n tyd toe swart en bruin mense slegs in hierdie saal hulle bier kon drink. Dit sê baie van die sosiale beperkinge wat op ons geplaas is. Die Biersaal het later as bioskoop en ontspanningsaal gedien. Met verloop van tyd is dit geïnkorporeer in die groter Katolieke Kerkkompleks.

My skooljaar het in 1967 by Reigerpark Laer begin. Dit was een van drie skole wat vernoem is na die skepe waarmee Jan van Riebeeck na die suidpunt van Afrika gekom het. Ons hoof destyds was mnr. Talbert Hendry. Hy was baie streng. My eerste klasonderwyseres was mej. Bezuidenhout. Ander onderwysers wat uitgestaan het, was mnr. en mej. Beck. Mnr. Sydney Beck was 'n kunstenaar wat veral baie met houtskool gewerk het. Op hierdie gebied het my vriend Willem (Valley) Lawrence baie goed presteer en later op hoërskool nog beter gevaar met tegniese tekene. Mnr. Everett Clements was ons Liggaamlike Opvoeding onderwyser. Later het ek my in die baie streng juf. Botha, vandag mev. Billings, se klas bevind. In my laaste jaar op laerskool was mnr. James Minnaar my klasonderwyser.

My hoërskooljare het by Oosrand Hoër in 1974 begin, wat na my mening die episentrum van sekondêre onderwys aan die Oos-Rand was. Kinders het van so ver as Heidelberg (Transvaal), Nigel, Payneville, Germiston, Edenvale en selfs Alexandra gekom om hier onderrig te word. My alma mater het van die beste studente opgelewer wat hulle later bekwaam het as onderwysers, medici, rekenkundiges, nyweraars, ens. Reigerpark

met sy sentrale ligging het baie mense gelok. Dit het 'n trekpleister vir baie mense geword wat nuwe geleenthede en ekonomiese bevryding gesoek het.

Die gemiddelde huisgesin het nie minder nie as vier kinders gehad. Daar was genoeg kinders van jou ouderdomsgroep om mee te speel. Albaster, sokker en wegkruipertjie was van die speletjies waarmee ons ons vrye tyd deurgebring het. Die woonbuurt het drie belangrike strate gehad: Thompsonstraat, Stanburysirkel en Rotarystraat, waarlangs die huurmotors en busse gery het. By die ingang van Rotarystraat is die hek beman deur munisipale polisie wat permitte gemonitor en toegang beheer het. Die kerke was in Kerkstraat, behalwe die Ebenezerkerk wat oorkant Goede Hoop Laerskool geleë was. Die Katolieke Kerk was geleë op die westelike grenslyn van die woonbuurt en die Baptiste Kerk in Thompsonstraat. Op laasgenoemde kerk se muur was die woorde "JESUS KOM WEER" in wit kalk geverf.

Ek dra geen kennis van die politieke debatte van daardie tyd nie vanweë my kinderlike onskuld. Ek wil graag glo dat ons wat uit Benoni gekom het, geen konflik ondervind het met die mense wat oorspronklik van Stirtonville was of die mense afkomstig van Germiston nie.

Die eerste uitbreiding is deur Bester Bouers in 1971 gebou. Hierdie gebied word MM (Ma se moer) genoem. Baie ander nuwe ontwikkelinge het gevolg. Die vervalle vaal huisies, enkelkwartiere, die treintjies en wat bekend gestaan het as die "Stands", is gesloop en vervang met wooneenhede wat geriewe soos binnenshuise toilette en wasgeriewe ingesluit het. Myns insiens is ons woonstelle van 'n goeie kwaliteit in vergelyking met dié in ander townships.

My kinderjare in die sestigs en sewentigs was midde-in die tyd van aparte ontwikkeling, rasseklassifikasies en die aandklokreël. Reigerpark het 'n prominente politieke figuur in Jacques Rabie gehad, wat destyds die Federale Party gelei het. Aan die wit kant het 'n persoon genaamd Gerry Oberholzer die Nasionale Party se diskriminerende wette laat geld in Reigerpark, deur uitsettingsbevele wat summier uitgevoer is wanneer gesinne versuim het om hul huur te betaal. Die permitstelsel het ook beslis hoe sommige mense gekom en gegaan het. In hierdie opsig is Van Rooi, die munisipale polisieman, ingespan om swart mense, veral huishulpe, in hegtenis te neem wie se pasdokumentasie nie in orde was nie.

Ek onthou nog die Republiekdagviering van 31 Mei 1971 wat in die Reigerpark-stadion plaasgevind het. Hierdie geleentheid is met veel fanfare gevier. Republiekdag is as 'n publieke vakansiedag herdenk tot en met die aanbreek van ons demokrasie in 1994.

Ek het na standerd 8 (graad 10) in 1977 my bekwaam as 'n algemene slyper *(universal grinder)*, 'n verfynde vorm van draaiwerk en in die ingenieurswese gaan werk. Ek het redelik goed in my werksomstandighede aangepas. Tog was daar geweldige diskriminasie met betrekking tot ons vergoedingspakkette teenoor dit wat die blankes verdien het. Ek is in 1984 getroud en uit ons huwelik is twee dogters, Eloise en Bronwynn, en een seun, Algee, gebore.Ek het ook 'n ouer dogter, Jennifer Whitney van Rooyen uit 'n vorige verhouding. Eloise en Algee het reeds ontslaap.

Die beoefening van sport was die beste afleiding vir baie jongmense. Op skool het atletiek 'n belangrike rol gespeel. Reigerpark het oorspronklik alle atletiekbyeenkomste in die Cinderella-stadion gehou. Sal ek ooit mnr. Bob Swarts vergeet, hoe spoggerig hy by hierdie byeenkomste aangetrek was met sy wit skoene, wit broek en spesiale hoed! So op sy eentjie het hy atmosfeer geskep. Reigerpark het later sy eie sportgrond ontwikkel, met 'n volledige atletiekbaan. Hier het van die beste atlete meegeding, o.a. Bernard Ellis, Marshel Naidoo, Godfrey Noble en Leonard Plaatjies. Later het Errol Fortuin, Pieter Fortuin, Ann Heyns, Kariem Ismael, Henry Legolie, Sebastian Williams en Vanessa Williams

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Promises of action, but Reiger Park is still simmering

Sporadic outbursts of violence are still occurring in already destroyed areas of Reiger Park.

Although the situation has calmed down a great deal since the weekend, more shops were burned down and looted during the week.

The uproar in Boksburg's coloured township, which reached a peak on Saturday, has attracted national interest and has evoked extensive reactions from Cabinet Ministers, who, according to statements, are still convinced that racial strife between Indians and coloureds was the immediate cause of the riots - despite denials from Reiger Park community leaders.

One such leader told the Advertiser that the riots were aimed at one specific Indian trader and taxi fleet owner, who recently started with renovations to a shop situated on ground set aside for an economic housing scheme.

Boycott

On Saturday, last week, a peaceful protest against renovations to the shop took place. Although the Town Secretary, Mr Johan Coetzee, explained at the time that the owner was aware that the ground had been earmarked for housing and was, therefore, also aware that his stay would be temporary, tension built up towards a climax during last week.

A large number of residents in the township decided during the week to launch a mass boycott against the trader's taxis, and pamphlets, their origin not yet established, were circulated.

These pamphlets, written in Afrikaans, called for a boycott, claiming it would be "for your own safety."

It read that Friday, last week, would be a day of "suffering" for the trader and that anyone who supported the Indian was a traitor to his own community.

It ended with "Alpha is not in vain" and "unity is strength."

However, nobody spoken to was able to identify the meaning of "Alpha."

It is believed that by 6pm on Friday, last week, all the Indian's taxis had left the East Rand Station, shortly after an elderly man had been stabbed in the neck.

Back in Reiger Park, about 100 cars drove through the township, supporting the boycott. Stones were thrown at the cars and it is believed that police were called in to retain order by making use of teargas.

About 30 minutes later, after more teargas bombs had been fired, the boycotters went home.

Mr Freeman feels that the outburst had started when coloured taxi drivers were assaulted at the station.

So far, the majority of shops in the township have been totally destroyed, including the consulting rooms of a resident Indian doctor.

Reactions of white leaders to the riots have been very similar, all agreeing that undelayed action should be taken to solve some of the immediate problems in Reiger Park.

Mr Chris Heunis, Minister of Internal Affairs, and Mr Pen Kotze, Minister of Community Development and State Auxiliary Services, said in a statement that a new area had been identified that will soon be advertised as a possible area of investigation by the Group Areas Board as an extension for Reiger Park.

Housing

Both acknowledged the chronic shortage of housing for coloureds in Boksburg and said the Government was aware that, for various reasons, over the past few years, a housing shortage had developed in Reiger Park.

The Ministers, together with the local M.P., Mr Sakkie Blanché and the Council's management committee chairman, Cllr Chris Smith, regretted the loss of lives, injuries and destruction of property.

One of the shops which was completely gutted by fire and then looted in one of the outbreaks of violence which shook Reiger Park during the past week.

Aziz Phillips (14) was killed in a shooting incident in Reiger Park on Saturday afternoon.

Young shooting victim was on his way home

One of the victims of the weekend uproar in Reiger Park, 14-year-old Aziz Phillips, was about to follow his father, Dennis, into the safety of their home when he was shot and killed.

Mr Phillips, of Clarence September Street, told the Advertiser he and his son had been talking to neighbours on Saturday afternoon when a crowd of residents and police came running down the road. He heard gunshots and decided to take his son indoors.

Witfield residents live in fear since knife attack

Zuleibna Asmal and her brother, Goolam Bibda, run a shop in the small shopping centre in the area. This shop was broken into on Monday

Mr Freeman feels that the

Reigerpark in die nuus: Die voorblad van *Boksburg Advertiser en boksburg volksblad* op Vrydag 15 Mei 1981.

naam gemaak in die naellope. Dan was daar John Burns en Akka Morris in spiesgooi en gewigstoot. Ek onthou ook hoe Neville van Ross (Hoppie) en later Elvis Kok op 'n onortodokse wyse hoogspring beoefen het. Nooit sou ek kon droom dat hul manier later wêreldwyd beoefen sou word nie!

Reigerpark Laer het die botoon gevoer tydens interskool atleliekbyeenkomste. Wat sekondêre skole-atletiek betref, het 'n titaniese stryd tussen Riverlea, Coronation High, CJ Botha, Eersterus en Oosrand Hoër afgespeel. Niemand het teruggedeins nie. Oosrand en Eersterus het op 'n gereelde basis hul posisie bo-aan die punteleer afgewissel.

Op Reigerpark-stadion was daar rugby-, hokkie- en netbalvelde waar die jong mense hul staal gewys het. Elders in die gebied was daar tennisbane waar sowel jong as ouer mense dié sportsoort beoefen het. Hierdie sportfasiliteite is later aangevul met 'n volledig toegeruste swembad wat vir groot vermaak gesorg het. Hier het Scampie, oorspronklik van Kimberley, homself as bobaasswemmer bewys.

Sokker se groot aftrek is duidelik in die groot aantal spanne wat bestaan het, soos Arabians, Blackburn, Boksburg Pirates, Callies, Crusaders, Orientals, Pixie, Rosebuds en Spades. Later het Manchester, Olympic Chiefs en Young Americans hulle buiging gemaak. In die oorgangstydperk het daar ander spanne ontstaan soos Boksburg Guild, Charlton, Stoke City en Wits. Daar was in daardie

tyd inderdaad 'n klomp spelers wat talentvol en toegewyd was. Individuele spelers kan nie uitgesonder word nie, want daar was te veel.

Van die groot name wat hierdie sokkerspanne bestuur het, was mnr. James Lyons van Boksburg Pirates, oom Lalie, wat saam met Oupa en oom Bonnie van Staade aan Blackburn verbonde was; oom Albert van Arabians; oom Piet Fortuin, wat saam met Tarzan (Ernest) Usher vir Spades verantwoordelik was; Pieter en Glenn Magerman van Pixie; mnr. Jarrice Shapiro (Toppa) van Callies, Arthur (oom Slate) Alvin van Olympic Chiefs; oom Mike van Crusaders; John Hartman van Rosebuds; Paul en Moses Lottering van die Young Americans; Tony Ferreira van Manchester en oom Dougie Anderson van Orientals.

Hierdie manne het soveel ingespan en opgeoffer om van ons gemeenskap 'n beter plek te maak. Hulle administrasie en passie vir die spel sal moeilik geëwenaar kan word. Ons is die Here ewig dankbaar vir die onuitwisbare spoor wat hierdie manne gelaat het. Vandag sit Winston Nelson hulle nalatingskap met ywer voort in die wyse waarop hy na die sportgrond omsien ten einde die spel te laat voortleef in Reigerpark.

Boks was ook 'n gewilde sportsoort. Die ou biblioteek en jeugsentrum in Thompsonstraat is vir hierdie doel gebruik. Hierdie klub is gelei deur oom Albert, wat Arabians sokkerklub se voorsitter was, en oom Ralph, die bekende fotograaf. Hulle is later deur oom Wally en Bruce Walten opgevolg, wat die jong seuns met geesdrif afgerig het. Daar was ook gedurende hierdie periode karate en judo by dieselfde fasiliteit aangebied deur onder andere Mervin Alberts (Leapies) en Edward Fillis (Hennie). James Knight en Arthur Botman se karateklub het dieselfde fasiliteit gebruik.

Beoefening van die kunste was ook 'n integrale deel van laerskool. Sang en poësievoordrag veral was aan die voorpunt. Deelname aan die skole-eisteddfod was die hoogtepunt vir menige leerling. So jammer dat dit op hoërskool uitgesterf het. Towerkuns is nie agterweë gelaat nie: oom Mannekaai (mnr. Stanley Billings) het ons gereeld by Reigerpark Laer kom vermaak.

Kerkdenominasies was verantwoordelik vir die geestelike versorging van Reigerpark. Daar was eerw. du Plessis (Congregational Kerk); ds. Jansen (NG kerk); eerw. McKerry (Metodiste Kerk), en Father Illett (Anglikaanse Kerk). My kerk, die Apostoliese Geloofsending van SA, was die grootste pinksterkerk. Pastoor Dirkie Boyens en ander pinksterkerke het later gevolg. Verder was daar die Spadereënse Kerk met die vroulike lidmate wat uitgeken kon word aan hulle blou rokke, mnr. Clifford Kawie se Lutherse Kerk en die reus van kinderkerk, oupa Pop, se Vrye Baptiste Kerk, wat 'n groot rol in die lewens van baie jong kinders gespeel het, ongeag denominasie. Die lys gaan verder: die Ou en Nuwe Apostoliese Kerk; die Sewendedagadventiste Kerk; die Jehova Getuies en die Nazareners.

Die Katolieke Kerk, veral onder die leiding van Father Stan Brennan, moet uitgesonder word vir sy rol in die gemeenskap. Father Stan was die toonbeeld van diensbaarheid en alombekend binne die gemeenskap. Hy was altyd bereid om die ekstra myl te loop deur sy kerkgebou beskikbaar te stel vir gemeenskapsdoeleindes in tye van nood en ook vir ander aangeleenthede. Fabrieke so ver as Alberton het op 'n gereelde basis die Katolieke kerksaal vir hulle jaareinde kersboomfunksie gebruik. Hier is menige kinders van werknemers en ander minderbevoorregte kinders trakteer. Father Stan se kontakte strek ver, soos bewys in die internasionale befondsing wat bekom is, van onder andere senator Andrew Young van die VSA, om 'n opvoedkundige sentrum op te rig.

Van oral op die Oos- Rand, vanaf Duduza tot Kathlehong, het mense hoërskoolopleiding hier ontvang. Dit was nie net akademies van aard nie, maar ook tegnies, want verskeie ambagsmanne is hier opgelei. Dank die Here hierdie opleiding gaan

tot vandag toe voort. Daar was ook 'n swembad op die perseel. Van die sportsoorte soos karate (en judo) het 'n gimnasium tot hul beskikking gehad waar Arthur Botman 'n geweldige impak gemaak het. Daar is ook voorsiening gemaak vir boks. Vandag spog boks met 'n nuwe gimnasium onder leiding van Neville Booysen.

Toe vigs sy verwoesting saai, het Father Stan fondse ingesamel om 'n sorgsentrum in die vorm van 'n kliniek op te rig om hierdie plaag hok te probeer slaan. Selfs al het baie mense in Reigerpark en omgewing gesterf, het die sorgsentrum geleë in Eveleigh, Boksburg, aan talle 'n kans op oorlewing gebied. Father Stan se naam sal vir altyd geassosieer word met St. Francis, die inrigting wat hoop aan die hopeloses gegee het en steeds gee.

Bendegeweld in Reigerpark is endemies. Onder baie van die jong seuns was daar nog altyd 'n kultuur van *only the strong will survive*. En nou praat ek ongelukkig uit ervaring omdat ek daardeur geraak en beïnvloed is. Gelukkig het my streng ma, baie geduldige en voorbeeldige pa en my godsdienstige opvoeding my in my storm-en-drangjare tot besinning laat kom.

Gelukkig was daar goeie speurders in die 1960's en 1970's, o.a. Humphreys (Baba Ham) en oom Abraham Morden. Oom Abraham veral het uitmuntende diens gelewer en geen steen onaangeroer gelaat om die strafregtelike prosesse deur sy speurwerk hul gang te laat gaan nie. Hy was goed bekend met baie van die misdadigers in die gebied. Hy het 'n goeie idee gehad van wie vyande was en so sy verdagtes vasgetrek.

Een Saterdagmiddag vermoor G en V vir D van die Fire Boys in die gebied wat bekend staan as Jerusalem. Die volgende dag op pad kerk toe kry ek vir oom Abraham op die moordtoneel waar hy 'n geweldige stuk beton in sy Ford Estcort se kattebak laai. Ek staan vir 'n wyle stil en so tien minute later kom hy verbygery met G en V, die verdagtes, agter in die motor. Hulle is etlike maande later doodstraf opgelê, wat later in lewenslange tronkstraf omskep is. Ek gewaar hulle vir die eerste keer na hulle vrylating in 2015, wat beteken dat hulle 25 jaar in die gevangenis deurgebring het. 'n Paar bendelede is al deur die hooggeregshof ter dood veroordeel, maar van hulle straf is later in lewenslange tronkstraf omskep. 'n Bendelid, HK, was nie so gelukkig nie en is in 1969 die doodstraf toegedien.

Hoe kan die euwel van bendes uitgeroei word? Myns insiens moet ouers hul Godgegewe plig nakom. Gemeenskapsorganisasies kan ook 'n groter rol speel. Slordige speurwerk wat die slagoffers benadeel, moet aangespreek word. Bendebedrywighede in die tronk, aangehelp deur onetiese bewaarders wat rehabilitasieprogramme kaap, moet met wortel en tak uitgeroei word. Dit is veral bendes soos die 26's en 28's wat hul houvas moet verloor. Die laaste maar nie die minste nie, is bekering dié oplossing met onmiddellike positiewe gevolge.

Iets wat besonders uitstaan van hierdie gemeenskap is die gees van welwillendheid om mense in hulle oomblik van nood by te staan. Die mense is ook vol sêgoed, soos om te *diezie*, wat beteken om mededeelsaam te wees, en die spreekwoord, *God will punish me/you*, wat 'n vrees vir God ingeboesem het. Ons vriendelikheid en gasvryheid is oor die jare heen bewys wanneer mense hulle toevlug na hierdie woonbuurt, agter die mynhope, geneem het vir werksgeleenthede en dan in die meeste gevalle hulle hier kom vestig het. Ek sou graag wil sien dat ons met dieselfde eensgesindheid opstaan teen die euwel van dwelmhandel en -misbruik.

Die opstande van 1981 in Reigerpark het sy aanloop oor 'n lang tydperk gehad. 'n Familie in die huurmotorbedryf het mense se menswaardigheid ondermyn. Hierdie familie het geen ontsag vir die bruin gemeenskap gehad nie, dit terwyl die gemeenskap hulle oor die jare

ondersteun en die familie finansieel floreer het. Vroeg in Mei 1981 het die Gangadins met van die ouer mans in die huurmotorbedryf in die gebied slaags geraak. Daardie Saterdagmiddag het die onderonsie in 'n opstand ontaard. Onskuldige winkeleienaars se winkels is gevandaliseer: voorraad is buitgemaak, en winkelgeboue en huurmotors is verbrand. Alles het in 'n puinhoop bly lê. Vroeër die middag het ek nog met Arthur Alvan, my niggie se man, gesels. Later die middag is hy deur die polisie gewond en twee weke later het hy in die hospitaal aan sy wonde beswyk. Intussen is ek huis toe waar ek die FA Cup finaal tussen Manchester United en Arsenal op die televisie gekyk het. Dieselfde aand is die jong seun van oom Dennis Phillips noodlottig gewond terwyl sy pa foto's van die gebeure geneem het. Vele ander mense is ook deur polisiekoeëls getref.

Die Sondagoggend na die erediens op pad huis toe het ek en 'n paar van die kerkbroers ons midde-in die spervuur tussen die polisie en die gemeenskap bevind. Thomas Damons is noodlottig in die bors deur 'n polisiekoeël getref. Later die middag is die jong Phillips-seun, Aziz, op Islamitiese wyse begrawe te midde van toenemende onrus in die gemeenskap. Terwyl 'n rookwolk oor Reigerpark hang, het die gemeenskap na hul huise teruggekeer met 'n swaarheid in hulle harte.

Die volgende Sondag is Thomas uit die Vrye Baptiste Kerk begrawe en die daaropvolgende Sondag, Arthur Alvan uit die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Gedurende die week het die polisie klopjagte uitgevoer en mense in hegtenis geneem wat as belhamels geïdentifiseer is. In 2004 het ek persoonlik die geleentheid gehad om met die Gangadins en Indiërsakemanne wat deur die opstand geraak is, by 'n versoeningsgeleentheid op Reigerpark-stadion te ontmoet. Ons het blad geskud en namens die gemeenskap 'n boodskap van versoening en vrede oorgedra.

Met verloop van tyd het my gesin dieper in die kerk betrokke geraak. My vrou Louise Anne (gebore Fortuin, oorspronklik van Elsiesrivier) het by die OK Bazaar in Eloffstraat in Johannesburg gewerk, waar ons dan ook al ons inkopies gedoen het. Die gevolg was dat ons nie juis by die verbruikersboikot van 1989 betrokke was nie.

Mynbedrywighede was maar altyd deel van Reigerpark en mynwerkers was 'n bekende gesig. Hulle het in 'n kampong in 'n mynhostel gewoon, waar die Elephant's Trading Store was. Ons gebied was op drie strategiese punte as't ware die middelpunt van hierdie industrie. As kinders het ons aanskou hoe mynwerkers met militêre presisie na die drie skagte marsjeer om ondergronds te gaan werk. Hierdie mynwerkers, die meeste afkomstig van Malawi, Lesotho en Zimbabwe, was baie nederige mense.

'n Groot aantal van hulle het in hulle vrye dae tuinwerk in Reigerpark gedoen. Hulle was baie netjies en betroubaar en het by geleentheid vir baie gesinne in die ou Riviera-houer heerlike magou gemaak. Onder hulle was daar goeie haarkappers wat ons hare teen 'n baie billike prys (een sjieling) geskeer het. Die minder waaghalsiges onder ons het Penningtons ondersteun, 'n haarkapper bedryf deur mnr. Pennington en sy seun Patrick, wat hare op 'n meer "gesofistikeerde" manier met elektriese haarknippers teen 'n ietwat duurder prys geskeer het.

Van die mynwerkers se gunstelingstokperdjies was om te poseer vir foto's met die destydse telefoon en hierdie foto's na hulle families te stuur as bewys van hulle vooruitgang. Die mynwerkers het geen beskeie bydrae gelewer tot die groeiende Suid-Afrikaanse ekonomie nie. Van die mynwerkers het hulle lewens verloor ter ondersteuning van 'n groeiende goudbedryf. Daarom moet ons ten alle koste vreemdelingehaat (xenofobie) bestry ter herinnering aan baie van hierdie hardwerkende buitelandse mynwerkers.

Daar is een boodskap wat ek graag by ons inwoners wil laat: laat ons nooit vergeet waar ons vandaan kom nie. Ons is mens deur ander mense. Ek doen pastorale werk in Reigerpark, maar veral ook in Windmill Park waar ons gemeente gevestig is. Uit die aard van my werk is ek voortdurend in kontak met vriende, familie en kennisse in Reigerpark. Ek is dus op hoogte van sake met die daaglikse stryd om oorlewing.

Daar is na my mening één oplossing, en dit is dat alle ouers, jonk en oud, alles in hulle vermoë moet doen om hulle kinders 'n goeie opvoeding te gee. Met apologie aan Confucius: as dit goed gaan met u kind, sal dit goed gaan met u gesinne, families en generasies wat nog kom.

Oktober 2021

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Van onderwyser tot prokureur

SIMON WANGRA

Ons was ’n gesin van sewe waarvan ek die tweede oudste van vyf broers was. Na wat ek verneem het, is ek in Brakpan op ’n kleinhoewe gebore. My pa het op die myn gewerk en my ma moes ’n huisbediende vir die kleinhoewe-eienaar gewees het. Dit sou die enigste rede wees waarom ons daar kon woon. Ons het seker maar, soos baie ander gesinne op die kleinhoewes, in ’n sinkkamer gewoon.

In ’n stadium het ons Benoni toe getrek en by ene oom Dawid in Parktown in Actonville in die huis gebly. Toe ek self- en plekbewus geraak het, het ons daar gewoon. Na omtrent drie jaar het ons teruggetrek Brakpan toe en weer in sinkkamers op verskillende kleinhoewes gewoon. Ek was agt jaar oud toe ons ons eerste driekamer baksteengebou gehuur het.

Op 11-jarige ouderdom het ons getrek en op die myn in ’n mynhuis gaan woon en vir die eerste keer elektrisiteit gehad. Ons het agt jaar op die myn gewoon totdat die myn gesluit en my pa afgedank is na 27 jaar en met ’n R16.00-tjek as pensioen. In 1969 het ons ons in Reigerpark gevestig.

In 1975 het ek na Alrapark, Nigel getrek en in 1981 het ek teruggetrek Reigerpark toe, tot ek die gebied in 2009 verlaat het.

Die verloop van my lewe

Ek het my laerskoolloopbaan aan Benoni Laerskool voltooi en my hoërskoolloopbaan aan William Hills Hoërskool. In 1962 het ek gematrikuleer en is na die Randse Onderwyskollege waar ek my onderwysdiploma in 1965 verkry het. Gedurende my onderwysloopbaan het ek die BA-graad aan Unisa voltooi, daarna my BProc-graad, ook aan Unisa, en later die BEd-graad aan die Universiteit van Johannesburg.

Gedurende my laerskooljare het ek per trein uit Brakpan na Benoni gereis en gedurende my hoërskooljare per fiets uit Van Dyk na Benoni toe. Kollege toe het ek per fiets tot op Boksburgstasie gery en daarna per trein tot in Westbury, Johannesburg.

Op 9-jarige ouderdom het ek naweke by 'n wit gesin werf skoongemaak, gehelp met die versorging van resiesperde en ook, saam met hulle seun, varke aan die mynmense verkoop. Daarna het ek gedurende skoolvakansies by 'n fabriek – Plywoods – gewerk. Later het ek naweekwerk by 'n winkel gedoen en vanaf standerd 8 op die spoorweg begin werk. Vir vyf jaar het ek elke vakansie as beddegoedbesorger op die trein gewerk.

In 1966 het ek my onderwysloopbaan aan Germiston Primêre Skool begin. In 1967 is ons oorgeplaas na die nuutgestigte Oosrand Hoër waar ek 10 jaar onderwys gegee het. Vanaf 1 Julie 1976 is ek as senior onderwyser by Payneville Middelbare Skool in Springs aangestel en vanaf 1 Januarie 1977 as prinsipaal. In 1984 is die skool gesluit omdat die gemeenskap na Geluksdal verskuif is as gevolg van die Groepsgebiedewet. Vir twee jaar was ek terug by Oosrand Hoër as beskermde hoof, waarna ek in Nigel by Suikerbosrand Primêr aangestel is. Dit was 'n skool vanaf graad 1 tot 12 met 1 565 leerlinge en 68 onderwysers.

Na twee jaar is ek oorgeplaas na Alrapark Sekondêre Skool om die nuwe hoërskool te begin. Vyf jaar later is ek aangestel as prinsipaal by Edenpark Sekondêre Skool, 'n pos wat ek vir twee jaar beklee het voordat ek as inspekteur van onderwys aangestel is. Na drie jaar, in 1997, het ek die onderwys vaarwel toegeroep.

In daardie stadium was ek reeds 'n Boksburgse stadsraadslid en onderburgemeester. Ek het daarin volhou tot 2000, toe ek dit ook vaarwel toegeroep het.

Ek is daarna na die Prokureursregskool waar ek 'n regskursus binne die voorgeskrewe jaar voltooi en daarna 'n leerlingskap van een jaar voltooi het. In 2004 het ek toelating as prokureur verkry. Ek het 16 jaar in die regsberoep voltooi en het in 2020 finaal uitgetree.

My gemeenskapsbetrokkenheid

Ek was by verskillende organisasies betrokke. Vir 'n aantal jaar was ek betrokke by SANRA

Agter: Johnny Issel, Roderick Jacobs en Kevin Ehrenreich. Sittende: Simon Wangra (Wangra-versameling).

(Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Raad vir Alkoholisme en Afhanklikheid van Verdowingsmiddels) in verskillende hoedanighede. Ek het gedien as voorsitter, as tesourier en ook as gewone lid van die bestuurskomitee, asook in verwante organisasies soos Al-Anon vir familie en vriende van alkoholiste, en Alkoholiste Anoniem, wat as terapeutiese en hulporganisasie vir pasiënte dien. SANRA het onder die voorsitterskap van mnr. Martin du Preez en daarna mnr. RC Billings gestaan. Laasgenoemde het veel gedoen om die organisasie op 'n gesonde finansiële grondslag te plaas en ons in staat gestel

om die onderskeie ampte in die organisasie te vul, naamlik inligtingsbeampte, verpleegster, welsynswerkster en ontvangsdame. In aansluiting by hierdie bedrywighede het ek drie jaar in die Reigerpark Welsynsraad gedien.

Ek was as sportman betrokke by die oprigting van die Boksburg Pioneers Rugbyklub en het in die eerstespan gespeel. Ek was afrigter en ook voorsitter van die klub. Nadat die rugbyunie tot stand gekom het,is ek tot voorsitter verkies. Voortspruitend hieruit was ek ook die afgevaardigde vir rugby op die Reigerpark Sportbeheerraad. Ek het met die steun van mnr. VCD Opperman my ook beywer vir die bevordering van rugby op skoolvlak. Voorts was ek ook behulpsaam met die stigting van die klub se hokkiespan.

Naas hierdie aktwiteite het ek as lidmaat van die Lutherse Kerk te Reigerpark in die afwesigheid van 'n plaaslike leraar vir dertien jaar as ouderling gedien. In dié tyd was ek verantwoordelik vir die hantering van alle gemeentelike aangeleenthede.

Die verskuiwing van Benoni na Reigerpark

Ek glo dat my drie jaar verblyf in Benoni, my laer- en hoërskooljare daar, my deelname aan sokker op Saterdae en bywoning van dienste in die Greek Orthodox Church op Sondae my 'n goeie agtergrond van die gemeenskap van Benoni gegee het. In Reigerpark het ek vir die eerste keer in my lewe in 'n gemeenskap met ander bekendes gewoon, binne loopafstand van vriende gebly en 'n gerieflike afstand vanaf my werk; ek het baie dinge waargeneem. Ek glo hierdie dinge was in daardie stadium baie belangriker as enige ander "ongerief" wat geheers het.

As daar nog enige twyfel bestaan het oor die vernietigende uitwerking wat gedwonge verskuiwings op gemeenskappe gehad het, is dit in Reigerpark totaal die nekslag toegedien. Ek wil graag verskillende aspekte van die verskuiwing na Reigerpark uitwys. In die besonder het dit eerstens tot die morele en geestelike verval van die mense gelei. In Benoni het mense oor die algemeen 'n stabiele, aspirerende en godsdienstige lewe gelei. Mense wat vir jare as 'ordentlik' beskou is, het 'n totale gedaanteverwisseling ondergaan en in drankmisbruik en wanordelikheid verval. Hulle het besope, vloekend en bakleiend deur die strate geloop.

Mense met wie jy vir jare bekend was, het nou 'n verleentheid geword. Jy het maar liewer na die ander kant van die straat gestap of gemaak asof jy hulle nie sien nie. Die vervalle toestand van die gemeenskap en in besonder baie mense wat ek vir jare persoonlik geken het, was skokkend. Dit was onverstaanbaar dat mense oornag so 'n gedaanteverwisseling kon ondergaan. Moenie dink hierdie verval was net tot volwassenes beperk nie. Dit het na die grootste deel van die jeug versprei. Drankmisbruik was nie net tot naweke beperk nie. Die gefuif het ook deur die week plaasgevind. Hierdie verval is nie net deur die misbruik van sterk drank teweeggebring nie, maar ook deur die misbruik van ander verslawende middels soos pers spiritus en die suig van bensien en gom, veral deur die jeug.

In teenstelling met vandag was daar in die vroeë jare nog baie werksgeleenthede, al was dit baie duidelik 'n tweesnydende swaard. Daar was weliswaar geld vir lewensmiddele, maar ook vir drank en ander dwelmmiddels, wat die situasie net vererger het. Dit het veral 'n vernietigende uitwerking op die gesinslewe gehad deurdat in baie gevalle albei ouers in hierdie toestand verval en hul werk verloor het, met gepaardgaande noodlottige gevolge vir die huisgesin, veral vir die kinders.

Veel word gepraat van die klimaat van geweld wat gedurende daardie jare in Reigerpark geheers het. Dit is waar dat gedurende daardie tyd baie mense beseer of gedood is. Dit is nie juis bendegeweld wat daartoe gelei het nie. 'n Bende impliseer 'n gestruktureerde groep mense wat op georganiseerde wyse dinge doen, wat nie juis hier die geval is nie. Wat ons in Reigerpark gekry

het, was enkelinge of klein groepies jongmense wat doelloos en onder die invloed van een of ander dwelmmiddel ander persone wou beseer of doodmaak. Die besluit om dood te maak is in die meeste gevalle deur die enkeling (of groepie) geneem. Die gevolg van hierdie groepies was dat daar 'n algemene toestand van gewelddadigheid en losbandigheid in die gebied se strate geheers het. In daardie stadium was geweld grootliks die gevolg van losbandigheid en die misbruik van sterk drank en ander dwelmmiddels.

Dit is slegs in die laaste tyd dat bendes tot stand gekom het. Dit is as gevolg van die verkoop van moderne dwelmmiddels soos heroïne, kokaïne en tik en die stryd om hul 'turf' of mark te behou. As jong man was ek nie noodwendig bevrees nie, maar as gevolg van al die ernstige misdaad was ek net baie versigtig. Ek het letterlik met oop oë geloop. 'n Ander faktor in my guns was dat ek baie lank sokker in die Oos-Transvaalse Sokkerunie gespeel het, waar ek saam met baie van die bendelede gespeel en ons mekaar tot 'n groot mate leer ken het. Voorts is ek geken as onderwyser en 'n onderwyser is tot 'n mate anders as ander persone behandel.

Hoe het die mense uit die onderskeie gebiede saam gewoon en was dit nie die oorsaak van die geweld nie? Op hierdie vraag kan ek prontuit antwoord dat daar nooit enige probleme tussen die onderskeie gemeenskappe was nie en dat die bendes nie enige spesifieke groep geteiken het nie. Die rede daarvoor was dat die mense in die onderskeie gebiede op die Oos-Rand mekaar reeds geken het. Ons dink hier veral aan mense in die verskillende gebiede wat aan dieselfde kerk behoort en mekaar só op gereelde grondslag ontmoet het. Die gedugte Oos-Tranvaalse Sokkerunie het spanne van al die gebiede op die Oos-Rand ingesluit wat oor die algemeen goed met mekaar oor die weg gekom het, behalwe vir enkele skermutselings tussen individue wat eintlik nooit ernstig of langdurig was nie. Gewoonlik het die tuisspan ná die wedstryd die besoekende span getrakteer en so mekaar leer ken en bevriend geraak. Ook het baie mense uit die verskillende gebiede mekaar daagliks ontmoet wanneer hulle per trein na hul werk in Johannesburg, Denver of Jeppe gereis het waar baie meubelfabrieke was. Die enigste hoërskool op die Oos-Rand was William Hills Hoërskool waarheen baie leerlinge van Springs, Brakpan, Boksburg, Jeppe en ander gebiede gereis het; hulle het mekaar hier leer ken en bevriend geraak. Die uiteinde was dat dit nooit eintlik vreemdelinge was wat saam in Reigerpark kom woon het nie.

Tweedens het die verskuiwing tot die verbrokkeling van 'n gemeenskapsgevoel gelei, iets wat vir jare in Benoni bestaan het. Die skepping van 'n gesonde gesinslewe vir kinders en deelname aan sport en gemeenskapsorganisasies soos die brigade het altyd prioriteit geniet. Veral is daar waarde geheg aan sosiale of gemeenskapsnorme wat afgelei kan word uit uitdrukkings soos "wat gaan die mense daarvan sê" of "wat sal die mense van ons dink?" Die mense was veral trots op die netheid van hul huise en omgewing. Huisgesinne wat jare lank vriende was, het skielik vreemdelinge vir mekaar geword.

Die toestand wat in Reigerpark geheers het met die intrek van mense uit die verskillende gebiede het grootliks tot bogenoemde situasies bygedra. Met die intrek was daar in die eerste plek nie voldoende behuising nie. Die enigste nuwe huise wat daar was, was die ongeveer dertig huise in Little Germiston, asook die huise wat deur die mense self in Reigerpark gebou is. Die woonstelle is eers later opgerig, nadat die mense reeds daar gevestig is. Verder moes al die mense – van Benoni, Brakpan, Germiston, State Mines, Putfontein – in die beskikbare behuising geakkommodeer word, met die gevolg dat meer as een gesin 'n huis/erf moes betrek.

Boonop was groot gedeeltes van die behuising in 'n vervalle toestand soos in die enkelkwartiere (Singles), die Doubles, die treinhuise en die vaalhuisies. Huise in Galeview het geen afgewerkte vloere gehad nie en die dakke was van asbes, in

Simon Wangra (Wangra-versameling).

baie gevalle gebreek, en eers oor jare deur die stadsraad vervang. Verder was daar baie ou huise aan die bokant (westekant) van Reigerpark, waar Oosrand Hoërskool is, wat om die een of ander rede afgebreek is. In sommige gevalle is die rommel nooit verwyder nie of het van die murasies bly staan.

Die gevolg was 'n vrugbare teelaarde vir misdaad. Baie vrouens is hier verkrag. Van hulle, asook baie jongmans, is selfs hier vermoor. Met die intrek in Reigerpark was daar geen straatligte nie en die gebied was saans in algehele donkerte gehul. Dit het grootliks tot die geweld en ander kriminele aktiwiteite bygedra. Masligte is eers later opgerig om die gebied saans te verlig.

'n Mens kon nie op die polisie staatmaak om die gemeenskap te beveilig en misdaad te bekamp nie. Die polisie het oor die algemeen geen belangstelling getoon om die misdaad en wanorde te bekamp nie. Een rede was die onvoldoende polisiebeamptes in die gebied. Die ander rede was dat baie polisiebeamptes van buite die gebied na Reigerpark gestuur is. Hulle was gewoonlik jonk en dit het hulle nie lank geneem om met kriminele elemente in die gebied vereenselwig te raak nie. Daar is drie beamptes wat ek moet uitsonder ter erkenning van die goeie werk wat hulle gedoen het en vir wie selfs die kriminele elemente respek gehad het: inspekteurs Freek Louw en Andrew 'Blackie' Swarts en speurder Abraham Morden.

In die afwesigheid van 'n funksionele polisiediens, wie het dan die situasie beredder? Ek wil erkenning gee aan drie instansies wat die leemte probeer vul het, naamlik skole, kerke en jeugorganisasies. Die skole het te midde van die moeilike omstandighede hul taak probeer vervul. Gelukkig het die gemeenskap, ten spyte van al die uitdagings, dit altyd belangrik beskou dat sy kinders moes skool bywoon. Die kerke het hulle geestelike werk met ywer gedoen en hoop in 'n donker situasie gebring. Hier dink ek nie net aan die gevestigde kerke nie, maar ook aan die sogenaamde 'handeklap kerke', die charismatiese kerke, wat Reigerpark op die geestelike pad gehou het. 'n Mens moet ook erkenning gee aan die vele jeugorganisasies wat bestaan het om die jeug te bearbei. 'n Mens moet baie dankbaar wees vir wat genoemde instansies verrig het.

Van gemeenskapsfasiliteite was daar nie juis sprake nie. Die enigste fasiliteite was twee geskraapte sokkervelde en 'n ongebruikte biblioteekgebou. As gevolg van die swak (sokker-) fasiliteite het belangstelling in sport heeltemal gekwyn. In Benoni het die sokkerunie uit tien gedugte spanne verteenwoordigend van al die gebiede op die Oos-Rand bestaan. Met die verskuiwing na Reigerpark het ses spanne in die eerste jaar ontbind of gedisintegreer. 'n Verdere vyf jaar later het die hele unie in duie gestort.

Versoeke aan die stadsraad vir die verskaffing van fasiliteite het op dowe ore geval. Hul geliefde antwoord was dat geld vir die verskaffing van geriewe ín Reigerpark úit Reigerpark moes kom. Blankes se geld kon nie gebruik word om geriewe in Reigerpark daar te stel nie. Die ander holrug geryde antwoord was dat ekonomiese hulp deur die Departement van Gemeenskapsbou verskaf moes word. Die stadsraad het geen entoesiasme getoon om die gebied te ontwikkel nie. Die belange van die blankes van Boksburg is altyd voorop gestel. Alhoewel Reigerpark self die geld vir sy eie ontwikkeling moes voorsien, was dit nooit moontlik nie. Sakemense uit ander gebiede kon byvoorbeeld nie fasiliteite of grond kry om sake te bedryf nie. Alles is gedoen om die koopkrag van Reigerpark vir die dorp of blanke besighede te behou. Die frustrasie hierin was die direkte oorsaak vir die brand en vernietiging van die oorwegend Indiër-ondernemings in Reigerpark in 1981.

'n Oorsig van die politiek van Reigerpark

Ten spyte van die veelvuldige probleme van Reigerpark het daar, sover ek bewus was, weinig enige openbare politieke gesprek bestaan. As daar enige politieke gesprekke plaasgevind het, was dit in geslote kringe. Nie dat daar geen politieke opinie in Reigerpark bestaan het nie. Die opinie wat geheers het, kan beskryf word as redelik konserwatief. Die konserwatisme het veral sy tuiste gehad by die ouer garde wat geen bespreking of teenspraak geduld het nie. Die beste bewys daarvan is dat Reigerpark van die hoogste stempersentasies in die eerste verkiesing vir die Driekamerparlement gehad het. Reigerpark het toe oorwegend vir partye soos die Federale en Nasionale Party gestem.

Veral twee gebeure in Reigerpark het 'n politieke kleur gehad: die afbranding van die Indiër-winkels, en die boikot van besighede in die dorp nadat die Boksburgmeer vir nie-blankes verbied is. Ongelukkig het hierdie suksesvolle agitasies nooit groter of hoër politieke doelwitte bereik nie. Daar was na die sukses daarvan nooit pogings aangewend om die gemeenskap polities saam te snoer tot groter politieke insig of om 'n groter politieke bewustheid te bevorder nie. Indien daar was, was dit onsuksesvol soos blyk uit die feit dat dieselfde mense wat so teen hul vernedering betoog het, weer in die verkiesing vir die Driekamerparlement vir konserwatiewe partye gestem het. Dieselfde partye het hul sukses aan hulself toegeëien.

My boodskap

Ten spyte van alles wat in Reigerpark gebeur het, het ek nog altyd groot geloof in die potensiaal van die mense gehad. Ek het nog altyd geglo dat Reigerpark die probleme wat die gebied teister, te bowe sal kom en tot een van die voorste gebiede sal ontwikkel. Heelparty individue het dit ook bewys.

Ek glo dat Reigerpark steeds daardie potensiaal besit, as ons net ons houding teenoor onsself en ander sal verander. Daarom glo ek dat die volgende die gebied oornag sal verander: rol die negatiwiteit van ander jeens jou af soos water op 'n eend se rug, moenie daardeur beïnvloed raak nie; tweedens, droom groot en streef dit na, want drome is inspirasie van Bo; derdens, reik 'n oop hand uit na almal in die gemeenskap; dit is slegs 'n oop hand wat kan ontvang; en laastens, moedig mekaar aan.

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My skooljare in Reigerpark en Dukathole

Arnold Smith

My naam is Arnold Smith, oorspronklik van Reigerpark, Chrysanthemumstraat 97a, wat noodgedwonge as gevolg van omstandighede in Germiston se kleurlinglokasie moes gaan woon. My ouers is later na Edenpark verskuif omdat groot gedeeltes van die grond waarop Germiston kleurlinglokasie geleë is, aan die chemiese reus NCP (National Chemical Products) verkoop is. Ek het nooit self in Edenpark gewoon nie. Na skool het ek aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland gaan studeer. In terme van die destydse apartheidsbeleid was hierdie die enigste universiteit waar ek sonder 'n permit kon studeer. Nadat ek as onderwyser gekwalifiseer het, het ek besluit om my in Belhar, 'n Kaapse voorstad te vestig. Ek is tans afgetree en woonagtig op die prentjiemooi Bolandse dorpie, Rawsonville, vanwaar ek 'n toermaatskappy bedryf.

My verbintenis met Reigerpark strek uit my primêre skooljare toe ek daar woonagtig was. Ek was 'n leerder by 'n skool vernoem na een van die drie skepe waarmee Jan van Riebeeck aan die Kaap geland het, naamlik Goede Hoop Laerskool. As ek nou terugkyk, besef ek dat my grootwordjare nie baie lekker was nie. Dit het tuis maar baie moeilik gegaan. Ek het ook nie vreeslik baie vriende gehad nie, behalwe Andries Oliphant wat later soos my broer geword het. Eers toe ek in st. 10 kom, het ek heelwat vriende gehad.

Saam met mnre. Wangra en Opperman het ek en Andries rugby in Reigerpark begin. Dit het tot die stigting van die eerste rugbyklub in die gebied gelei, naamlik Pioneers Rugby Football Club. Dit was definitief die hoogtepunt van my tyd aan Oosrand Hoërskool. Oor die algemeen was my matriekjaar by Oosrand Hoër die beste deel van my grootwordjare. Ek het vir die eerste keer ware vriende gehad en my onderwysers het 'n blywende invloed op die res van my lewe gehad, veral mnre. Wangra, Opperman en natuurlik Girr, my geskiedenisonderwyser mnr. William J Filander, wat in 1978 prinsipaal geword het.

Maar telkemale is die mat onder my voete uitgeruk omdat ek moes verhuis. Ek het dan as

gevolg van omstandighede tuis vir periodes by verskillende tannies in Jerusalem of die Singles gaan woon. Miskien verduidelik dit waarom ek my grootwordjare gerieflikheidshalwe nie kán of wíl onthou nie. Ek dink ek kon nêrens heeltemal reg wortelskiet nie, en gevolglik is en bly ek maar net 'n swerwer en kan maar net saamstem met Totius: waarlikwaar, die wêreld is my woning nie.

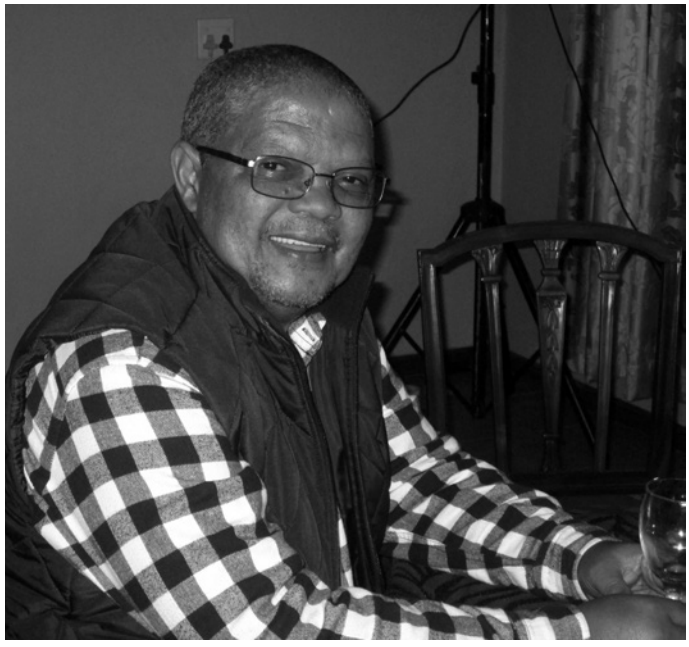
Soos reeds genoem, moes ons gesin as gevolg van omstandighede buite ons beheer in die krotbuurt van Germiston, ook genoem Germiston kleurlinglokasie of Dukathole, gaan woon. Wat 'n hartseer en treurige situasie om in te lewe. Die toestande in die buurt was so sleg en ongesond dat 'n mens kwalik daar kon bestaan: sinkhuise, 'n afwesigheid van teerpaaie, gebrekkige gemeenskapsgeriewe soos 'n biblioteek of sportgeriewe. Kulturele en sportaktiwiteite het nie eintlik in hierdie lokasie bestaan nie. Die omstandighede was uiters treurig en beslis nie bevorderlik vir enige kind met hoop of drome nie. Ek het net geweet ek moes klaarmaak met skool en daarna die gebied se stof van my voete afskud.

Ek het daarom geen keuse gehad nie as om daagliks die lang tog per bus na Oosrand Hoërskool aan te pak. Al wat my bybly van my hoërskooljare was dat ek letterlik alles in my vermoë gedoen het om te midde van hierdie omstandighede staande te bly. Ja, dit was vir my 'n absolute stryd om oorlewing. Ek het 'n stryd gevoer om net fisies aan die lewe te bly in Germiston kleurlinglokasie. Ek het alles in die stryd gewerp om nie in bendebedrywighede betrokke te raak of in slegte gewoontes te verval nie. Dis waarom ek by die skool moes uitkom, *come what may*, want in Reigerpark, by Oosrand Hoër, het ek hoop gevind. Dis waarom die skool se leuse, "arbeid adel", my vandag nog bybly.

As dit nie vir my geloof in die Here was nie, sou ek dit waarskynlik nie gemaak het nie. Ek moes net eenvoudig aan die Here vashou om lewe en dood. Ons het by die munisipale werf kerk gehou en die superintendent, mnr. M Vrey, was ook die persoon wat stoksielalleen probeer het om hoop te gee vir die andersins verloregaande kinders van hierdie krotbuurt. Mnr. Vrey het ons geleer om gimnastiek te doen en op hierdie wyse baie gedoen om ons dissipline te leer en gefokus te bly. Dan het hy ons ook toegelaat om op enige beskikbare geleentheid in sy kantoor huiswerk te doen of te studeer. Verder moes ons maar sport probeer beoefen op die mynkampong se veld omdat daar geen sportgeriewe vir ons was nie. Daar was geen buitemuurse aktiwiteite in die lokasie vir groeiende kinders nie. Ons ouers was verplig om tot donker te werk net om die pot aan die kook te hou. Die kinders was tragies aan hul eie lot oorgelaat en min volwassenes het eintlik omgegee wat uiteindelik van hulle sou word.

Dit was ook nog meer rede waarom dié wat wou, en natuurlik diegene wat dit kon bekostig, alles in hulle vermoë gedoen om by die naaste hoërskool, Oosrand, uit te kom. Reigerpark was vir kinders van Germiston 'n baken van hoop. Dáár is goeie vooruitgang met ontwikkelinge soos gemeenskaps- en sportgeriewe gemaak. Dan het die hoërskool ook goeie dissipline gehandhaaf en dit het beslis baie gehelp om ons op die *straight and narrow* te hou. Daarom het ek 'n diepe begeerte gehad om eendag as onderwyser na my alma mater terug te keer as blyk van waardering, maar ongelukkig was dit my nie beskore nie. Wat 'n absolute jammerte, *but that's life.*

My tyd by Oosrand Hoër kan ten beste beskryf word as traumaties, met die uitsondering van my matriekjaar. Dit was 'n stryd om by die skool uit te kom. Reigerpark het baie verder as agt kilometer van Germistonlokasie af gevoel. Tog was skool ons enigste hoop, en in die omstandighede waaronder ons moes woon, was skoolbywoning die een ding waarna ons uitgesien het. Daarom is die grootste herinneringe van my kinderdae my skooljare by Oosrand. Dit voel asof 'n mens onbewustelik jou grootwordjare in Germiston uitblokkeer, so, asof jy net eenvoudig nie daaraan wíl of kán dink nie.



Arnold Smith (Hein Willemse).

Ons moet ook nie vergeet nie dat die meeste kleurlingwoonbuurte geen geskiedenis het waarop ’n mens kan terugval nie. Bitterlange pogings om navorsing oor Germiston se kleurlinglokasie te doen het elke keer op ’n dooie punt uitgeloop. Dit voel asof selfs die plaaslike owerheid, Ekurhuleni, skaam is oor daai krotbuurt. Ek kon gelukkig op my enigste oorblywende vriende van Germiston, Luis en Charmaine Tattle, se geheue staatmaak om te help om ons reiservarings na en van Oosrand Hoërskool te probeer rekonstrueer. Ons gaan probeer oproep wat ons ervaringe was terwyl ons so ’n intense stryd teen omstandighede moes voer om onderrig by ’n verafgeleë hoërskool, soos dit vir ons gevoel het, te kon ontvang. Ek moet sê, skoolgaan het maar min gehelp om dinge beter te maak vir die talle kinders in Germiston wat geen visie of toekomsverwagting gehad het nie.

Na voltooiing van st. 5 in die lokasie was ons verplig om ons skoolloopbaan in Reigerpark, by Oosrand Hoër, voort te sit. Die nagmerrie om vanaf Germiston by die skool uit te kom het begin. Daar was ’n bus wat 90 passasiers op ’n slag kon vervoer. Baie dae was die bus heeltemal oorlaai. Later het hulle ons selfs met ’n tweedekker vervoer. Jy moes om vyfuur soggens opstaan sodat jy om sesuur by die busstop kon wees ten einde teen agtuur by die skool te arriveer. Sou jy die bus verpas, moes jy maar die trein vanaf Germiston tot by Oos-Randstasie neem. Daarvandaan moes jy ’n taxi tot by die skool neem, wat beteken dat jy so om en by tienuur by die skool sou aankom. Onthou, hierdie opsie was net vir leerlinge wat dit kon bekostig. As jy nie geld gehad het nie, moes jy maar met dapper en stapper die pad aandurf. Hoe dit ook al sy, jy gaan óf die eerste vier periodes mis as jy per trein reis, óf agt periodes as jy te voet gaan; as jy nie hiervoor kans gesien het nie, het jy maar tuisgebly en die hele skooldag verloor. Verlore werk inhaal? Ag nee wat, dit was glad nie ’n opsie nie.

Daar was ’n koepon wat ons elke maand moes koop om op die bus toegelaat te word. As jy nie koepons gekoop het nie, of jou koepons verloor het, moes jy dubbel betaal om saam te ry. Dieselfde bus het soggens op pad skool toe nog mense langs die pad opgelaai wat op pad werk toe was. Dit was baie moeilik, want as werksmense opklim, moes die leerlinge hulle sitplekke prysgee totdat die werksmense weer uitklim. Sou jy voor in die bus sit en weier om jou sitplek af te staan, is jy by die skoolhoof gerapporteer. Die skoolhoof sou jou gou uitsorteer en dan boonop jou ouers in kennis stel, met die gevolg dat jy by die huis ook deurgeloop het. Met soveel leerlinge in die bus wat baklei en raas was daar geen manier dat jy kon leer, lees of skoolwerk doen nie. Male sonder tal was daar woeste gevegte onder die leerlinge in die bus. Die bakleiery was meestal tussen seuns, maar nou en dan het meisies ook handgemeen geraak, baie keer oor onbenullighede soos ’n *boyfriend*. Maar teen die tyd dat ons by die skool aankom, was die vrede gewoonlik herstel.

Die bus het ons so 500 meter van die skoolhek afgelaai. Dan moes ons verby winkels loop waar kwajongens op die stoepe rondgestaan, die meisies

seksueel geteister en die seuns wat durf keer, aangerand het. As jy hierdie tipe behandeling wou vryspring, moes jy elke keer aan hierdie booswigte geld vir beskerming gee. As jy nie geld gehad het nie, moes jy maar hardloop vir al wat dit werd was. Soms, wanneer daar onderwysers of polisie teenwoordig was, was die kwajongens skoonveld, maar die volgende dag sou hulle ons weer op die winkelstoep inwag. In die somer reën dit gewoonlik baie en met geen skuiling nie moes jy maar sopnat in die skoolbanke gaan sit. Later het ons slim geraak en 'n ekstra hemp en broek in ons plastieksak saamgedra. Van toebroodjies was daar nie sprake nie. Diegene wat geld gehad het, kon lekkers of so koop soos hulle verby die winkels gestap het.

Namiddae is ons tussen drieuur en halfvier opgelaai; dis nou as die bus wel opgedaag het. Terwyl ons inklim, sou leerlinge wat nie koepons het nie skelm deur die agterste venster ingetrek word. En jy wat sien, moet maar jou mond hou as jy nie in 'n busgeveg betrokke wil raak nie. Van die meisies veral het tevergeefs probeer om in die bus te lees of te leer, want jy was letterlik rondgeskud, in so 'n mate dat jy doodmoeg so tussen vyf- en sesuur by die huis aangekom het. Dis nou te sê as die bus nie langs die pad gebreek het nie, in welke geval ons dan donker by die huis aangekom het. Jy gaan donker uit die huis en kom donker terug. Dan moes jy jou skoolwerk by kerslig doen, want baie van die huise het glad nie elektrisiteit gehad nie. As gevolg daarvan was baie leerlinge die volgende dag in die moeilikheid omdat hulle skoolboeke nie baie netjies was nie en feitlik altyd vol kersvetkolle.

Daar was selfs tye dat die bus glad nie soggens opgedaag het nie, sonder enige kennisgewing. Ons moes in totale onsekerheid geduldig wag en maar probeer om skoolwerk daar by die busstop te doen. Jy kon nie teruggaan huis toe nie, omdat die bus moontlik nog kon kom. Soos ons op pad skool of huis toe deur die nywerheidsgebied gery het, is ons telkemale vir lang tye opgehou deur byvoorbeeld 'n lang goederetrein of 'n massiewe hyskraan wat dwars oor die pad gestaan het. Party kere het die bus weer te vroeg by die skool aangekom, wat natuurlik 'n geleentheid was vir leerlinge om onvoltooide tuiswerk klaar te maak. Maar die ander kant van die muntstuk was ook waar. Dit het vir baie leerlinge die geleentheid gebied om kattekwaad aan te vang soos rook, steel of om meisies seksueel te teister.

'n Alternatiewe manier om by die skool uit te kom, was om met 'n aanmekaargelaste fiets die pad aan te durf. In die meeste gevalle is hierdie fietsryers langs die pad beroof, aangerand, hul fietse afgevat en hulle skoolboeke in die Bloudam gegooi. Baie keer was dit net geweldige moeite om op die fiets tot by die skool of huis te bly. Val sou jy val, en skade sou jy ly, dan het jy maar teruggehardloop huis toe en so is nog 'n skooldag in sy peetjie. Baie dae het jy met lelike beserings by die huis aangekom. Die nadeel van te fiets skool toe ry, as jy gelukkig is om dit tot by die skool te maak, is dat jy natgesweet en vuil by die skool aankom. Daar was nie behoorlike kleedkamers by die skool nie, dan ruik jy heeldag na sweet, was uiters selfbewus om met jou klasmaats te kommunikeer en moes ver van die ander leerlinge sit. Gedwonge afsondering!

Van die moeilikste tye vir Germiston se kinders wat in Reigerpark skoolgegaan het, was tydens eksamen of as jy na skool moes bly vir sportoefening. Jy het die heeltyd vrees en angs ervaar oor hoe, en of, jy by die huis sou uitkom. Dit was nie die skoolhoof, onderwyser of skool se probleem hoe jy ná die eksamen of sportoefening by die huis kom nie. Baie keer het jy geweet wat op daai stuk pad op jou wag, veral as jy selfs donker by die huis sou aankom. Dis miskien een van die redes wat daartoe bygedra het dat so min of niemand van die lokasiekinders akademies of op sportgebied uitgeblink het nie. Rugby en ander sportsoorte is hoofsaaklik oor naweke beoefen, wat beteken het dat die kinders van Germiston weer eens gemarginaliseer is omdat daar geen publieke vervoer na Reigerpark oor naweke beskikbaar was

nie. Tydens die eksamen is leerlinge toegelaat om huis toe te gaan sodra hulle klaar geskryf het. Dis dan dat die Germistonse kinders wag totdat hulle 'n groot genoeg groepie is voordat hulle te voet die vlaktes en digte bosse trotseer om by die huis uit te kom. Toegegee, hierdie roete was ietwat korter, maar nie minder gevaarlik nie. Sommige warm somerdae het van die seuns gou 'n duik in die dam gevat terwyl daar geen booswigte in die nabyheid was nie. So gou soos hulle in die water was, moes hulle weer vinnig uit, want die dam is presies halfpad tussen die skool en die huis en die huis was nog ver.

Om skool by te woon was inderdaad 'n frustrerende uitdaging wat baie van Dukathole se kinders so ontmoedig het dat hulle maar langs die pad tou opgegooi en *drop-outs* geword het. Was dit nie miskien een van die faktore wat daartoe bygedra het dat die meeste van hierdie kinders nie 'n keuse gehad het as om maar die *vicious circle* te aanvaar, kinders te maak en in hul ouers se agterwerf 'n hokkie op te slaan nie? En hulle kinders het maar net weer deur presies dieselfde traumatiese leefwyse gegaan en sodoende maar net ook *drop-outs* geword. Hoeveel van ons kinders se skoolloopbane is op hierdie manier kortgeknip?

Hierdie wedervaringe het beslis jou karakter op een of ander wyse gevorm. Jy is baie keer gedwing om voor jou tyd ryp of grootmens te word. Jy moes letterlik jou eie heil uitwerk. Jy moes jou eie planne maak om uitdagings te oorkom net om by die skool uit te kom en in die proses kon jy net op jouself staatmaak. Maar jy kon nie anders nie as om soos 'n uitgeworpene of 'n *alien* te voel. Jy het nooit gevoel dat jy deel van die skool is of dat jy by die skool hoort nie. Want môre in die klas stel meneer nie belang in jou traumatiese ervarings op pad huis toe nie. Jou huiswerk moet net eenvoudig gedoen wees, ongeag die feit dat julle nie elektrisiteit tuis het nie. So nie, is ses van die beste jou voorland. Nou verstaan jy dat die leerlinge wat nie hierdie trauma kon trotseer nie, nie ver op skool gekom of op sportgebied gepresteer het nie. Daarom het so baie van Germiston se kinders *drop-outs* geword, net nog 'n statistiek, met geen visie of toekoms nie.

Al het ek dit gemaak en al was ek een van die gelukkiges om weg te kom, sou ek tog verkies het om in die gebied naby die skool te kon bly. Natuurlik sou dit die ongerief van vyfuur soggens opstaan, die geraas en gewoel in die bus en die laatkom by die huis uitskakel. Ook sou ek baie beter op my skoolwerk en sportaktiwiteite kon konsentreer. Ek dink stellig dat baie ander leerlinge ook beter sou presteer en beslis 'n trappie hoër sou gevorder het as hulle dieselfde deursettingsvermoë gehad het.

Hierdie is my hartseer en traumatiese storie. Dit is die storie van *The one that got away* en deur God se genade probeer het om iets van sy lewe te maak ten spyte van die lewe in Germiston kleurlinglokasie. Ek is besonder dankbaar teenoor die Here dat my grootwordjare en omstandighede nie my toekoms bepaal het nie. Wat my altyd sal bybly, is dat ten spyte van alles Jeremia 29: 11 'n werklikheid in my lewe geword het en altyd sal bly.

23

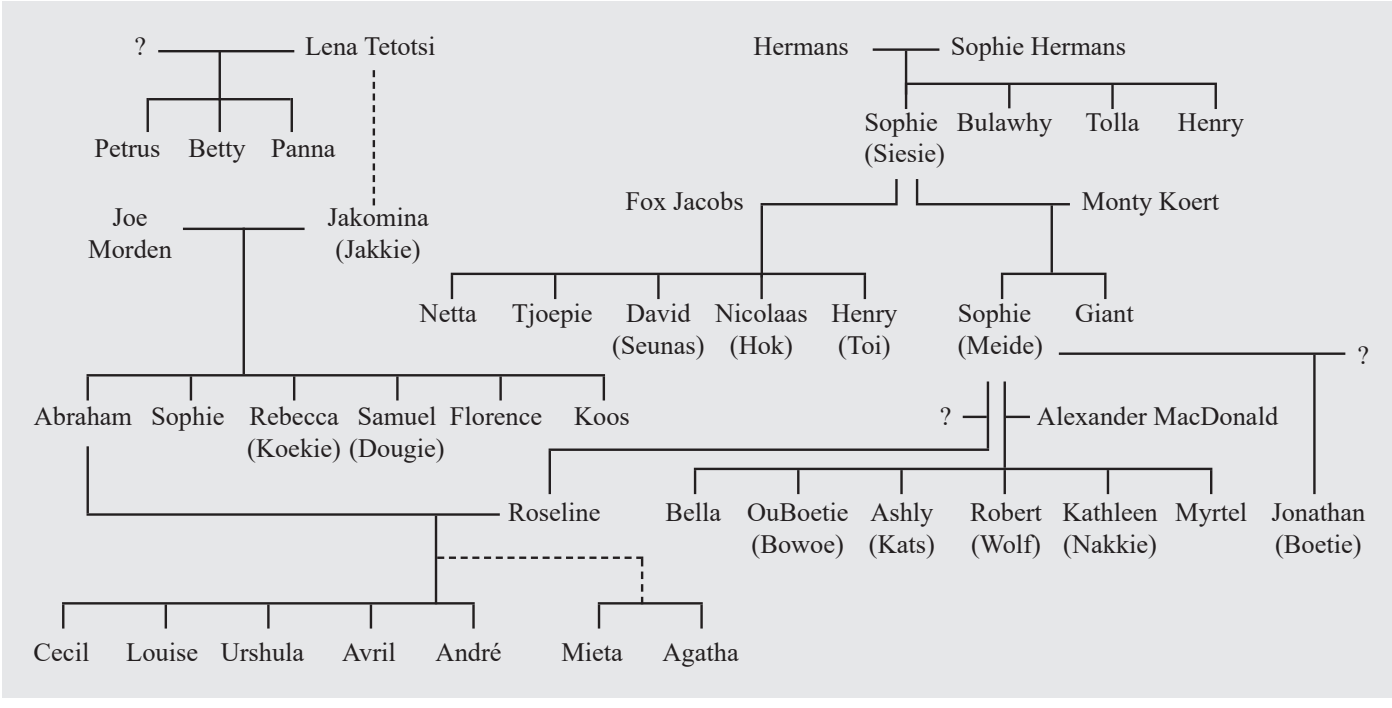
Vanaf Modderbee en Sophiatown na Dukathole, toe na Reigerpark

Cecil H Morden

Ek is in Germiston op 9 Oktober 1956 gebore. Ons het in Twaalfdestraat in die lokasie Dukathole gewoon. Die laaste straat was Dertiendestraat en daarnaas was die spoorlyn wat suidoos in die rigting van Durban en noordwes na Johannesburg geloop het. Ouma Jakkie (Jakomina Morden), my pa se ma, het aan die westekant oorkant ons gewoon. Ant Peggy de Lange het langsaan ouma Morden gebly. Sy was 'n goeie buurvrou wat saam met die familie kerk toe gegaan het. Verderaan in die straat, aan ons kant, het my ander ouma, ouma Meide (Mavis Sophie MacDonald), my ma se ma, gewoon.

Ouma Meide se ma, ant Siesie (Sophie Jacobs) en haar man Pappie (Fox Jacobs), my ouma- en oupagrootjie, het in Tiendestraat gewoon. Oumagrootjie Jacobs se ma, grootjie Sophie Hermans, het in Sesdestraat gewoon en was glo 'n bekende vroedvrou in die gebied. Bella, my ma se suster, het 'n foto van haar in haar wit uitrusting terwyl sy 'n onbekende baba vashou wat sy self "gevang" het. My ma het 'n groot gedeelte van haar kinderjare by haar gewoon. Grootjie Hermans kom oorspronklik vanaf Colesburg in die Noord-Kaap. Toe sy noordwaarts trek, het sy en haar gesin aanvanklik in Sophiatown wat ongeveer in 1904 ontstaan het, gebly. Sy het vier seuns gehad: Bulawhy, Tolla, Henry en een seun wat in die Tweede Wêreldoorlog gesneuwel het en een dogter, ant Siesie, my oumagrootjie. Henry was met Tiena getroud, Tolla met Kalbas en Bulawhy met Siesietjie se ma. Laasgenoemde paartjie was kinderloos.

Ant Siesie het met Fox Jacobs getrou terwyl hulle nog in Sophiatown gewoon het. Hy was haar tweede kêrel. Haar eerste kêrel was Monty Koert, by wie sy twee kinders gehad het: Giant en Mavis. Laasgenoemde is my ouma. Giant is in Johannesburg by 'n dobbelplek vermoor. Ant Siesie en Pappie het drie seuns gehad: Seunas (David), Hok (Nicolaas) en Toi (Henry), en twee dogters, Netta en Tjoepie. Pappie se familie is oorspronklik van Kliptown en Grasmere, later Ennerdale. In die laat- 1940's het die Jacobs-egpaar met hul sewe kinders vanaf Sophiatown na Germiston



Kwartierstaat van Morden- en Hermans-families.

(Dukathole, ook Blikkiesdorp genoem) verhuis. 'Oupagrootjie' Monty Koert en sy nuwe gesin het na Alexander township verhuis, daarna na Westbury en nog later na Eldoradopark. My ma het oor die jare kontak met die Koerts, haar ander "familie" (haar ma se halfbroer en -susters), behou.

Grootjie Sophie Hermans is op 16 Desember 1965 oorlede, ongeveer 8 jaar ná haar skoonseun Pappie, wat in 1957 of 1958 gesterf het. Bulawhy is kort na sy ma oorlede; kanker het oom Henry se lewe geëis en oom Tas is in Germiston oorlede. Sy gesin het later Edenpark toe getrek.

Ouma Meide (geb. Hermans) gebore op 15 Desember 1920 in Sophiatown, het agt kinders gehad, vier dogters en vier seuns. My ma is die oudste en is gebore op 20 Desember 1938 in Sophiatown. Sy het nooit haar biologiese pa geken nie. My ouma het 'n ruk na my ma se geboorte met Alexander MacDonald getrou. Oupa MacDonald was van Potchefstroom en het later blykbaar meer daar as in Germiston gewoon. Ek het hom nie geken nie. Ons het wel 'n paar keer op Potchefstroom by die familie gaan kuier, maar toe was hy al oorlede.

HIERDIE HOEKSTEEN IS GELÊ DEUR
OUDERLING BRD. D. J. VAN WYK
OP DIE 27. 5. 1984
TOT ERE AAN GOD
TER NAGEDAGTENIS VAN SUSTERS
M. L. JACOBS DIAKONES
EN E. G. THOMAS.

Hoeksteen by die AGS-kerkgebou in Edenpark ter nagedagtenis van oumagrootjie ML Jacobs en EG Thomas (CH Morden).

Die Morden- en Hermans-voorgeslagte: Links bo: Sophie Jacobs, Mavis Hermans, Bulawhy Hermans, mev. Hermans (geb. Buys), Onbekend, mev. James. Links onder, agter: Roseline Morden (geb. Hermans), Rebecca (Koekie) Morden, Sophie Morden, Florence Morden, Joe Morden (oupa), Jakomina Morden (ouma), Dougie Morden en Abraham Morden. Voor: mnr. Ramsey, Koos Morden en mev. Ramsey. Regs: Ouma Sophie Hermans met 'n onbekende nasaat. Regs onder: Sophie Hermans se persoonskaart na die invoer van die Bevolkingsregistrasiewet van 1950 (Morden-versameling).

Die drie susters – my ma, antie Bella (Isabella Lawrence) en Nakkie (Kathleen Erasmus) met wie ek op 1 Oktober 2020 'n onderhoud vir hierdie hoofstuk gevoer het, is dit eens dat ten spyte van swaar tye en armoede, Germiston 'n lekker plek was. Dit beteken nie dat alles altyd klopdisselboom gegaan het nie, want Nakkie onthou dat Marjorie

Groenewald se broer in die Cape Stands vermoor is. Daar was 'n goudmyn aan die agterkant van die treinspoor en 'n hostel naby die Cape Stands waar baie van die mynwerkers gewoon het. Die susters het soms by die ingang van die hostel magou en katkop (iets soos aaneengebakte broodrolletjies) by die werkers gekoop, van die daaglikse rantsoene wat hulle by die myn gekry het.

Aan die suide van die lokasie was daar 'n woonbuurt vir Indiërs. Ons het hierdie gedeelte van die lokasie baie besoek, want die meeste van die winkels waar ons ons daaglikse benodigdhede gekoop het, was daar geleë. Daar was ook een of twee Chinese winkels, een met die naam Shoetek. My ouma se een halfsuster, antie Netta, het later hier gaan huis opsit nadat sy het met uncle Ronnie Chetty getrou het. Verder suid, in die rigting van Elsburg en nie ver van 'n groot vullishoop nie, was daar 'n paar huise in 'n area bekend as Ghost Town. Oom Teddy en ant Flatta Wilkinson het daar met hulle kinders gewoon.

'n Paar van die winkels in die gebied waar ons gewoon het, het swart eienaars gehad. Daar was ook 'n vis-en-chips winkel, selfs 'n motorwerktuigkundige. Dit was die gebruik van winkeliers om vir ons pasella te gee wanneer ons iets gekoop het, gewoonlik lekkers, 'n vorm van bemarking om ons terug te lok.

Ant Siesie was die matriarg van die familie en het ook 'n groot rol in die Kerk, die Apostoliese Geloofsending van Suid-Afrika, in Germiston gespeel. Die hoeksteen van die AGS-kerk in Edenpark, gelê op 27 Mei 1984 deur ouderling DJ van Wyk, is toegewy ter nagedagtenis aan susters ML Jacobs, my oumagrootjie ('n diakones), en EG Thomas, 'n medegelowige en haar hegte vriendin. Die eerste AGS-kerkgebou is in die Cape Stands opgerig. Toe hierdie gedeelte van die woonbuurt, die kerk ingesluit, later gesloop is, is daar weer 'n sinkkerk in Vierdestraat gebou. Oom Pietie van der Ross was aan die begin leier van hierdie gemeente. Hy het in Newclare gebly en naweke Germiston toe gereis om die dienste te behartig.

Die Jacobs-, MacDonald- en Mordenfamilies van Germiston het met spesiale geleenthede AGS-kerkdienste in Albertsville, Nancefield en later Newclare bygewoon. Nakkie onthou Albertsville[1] as een van die mooiste bruin gebiede van destyds. Nakkie onthou ook dat haar tante Tjoepie bevriend was met antie Mieta, suster van Errol Fortuin se ma Poppie, en soms by haar op Modderbee gaan kuier het.

Oupa- en oumagrootjie Jacobs het 'n huis van mevrou Jansen gehuur, Siena en Stoffel Jansen se ouma wat toe in Stirtonville gewoon het. (Nog 'n interessante brokkie geskiedenis oor Stirtonville - wat later Reigerpark geword het - wat die drie MacDonald-susters onthou, is dat mnr. Richard MacClean, oorspronklik vanaf Potchefstroom, toe hoof was van 'n klein Indiërskool in die gebied.) Omtrent 500 meter aan die noordekant van ant Siesie en Pappie se huis in Dukathole was daar 'n groot hostel waar trekarbeiders gewoon het. Die skool was aan die westekant van die lokasie, aangrensend aan die nywerheidsgebied. Die fabriek naaste aan die skool was NCP (National Chemical Products). Vroeër jare het die bruin mense van Germistonlokasie in die 'Cape Stands' gewoon; dit was 'n ent verder noordwes van die skool. Later jare, in die 1950's, is die Cape Stands gesloop en deur 'n nywerheidsgebied vervang. Die bruin mense moes effens suidoos trek, waar hoofsaaklik swart mense gewoon het. Teen die laat 1950's, vroeg 1960's, is die meeste van die swart inwoners vanaf Dukathole Katlehong toe verskuif, die nuwe swart woongebied suid van Germiston. Die huise wat hulle ontruim het, is toe deur bruin mense bewoon.

Sokker was 'n baie gewilde sport in Germiston. Destyds was dit slegs mans wat sokker gespeel het. Twee van die MacDonald-broers het sokker gespeel, elkeen vir sy onderskeie klub. Alexander, beter bekend as Bowoe/Ouboetie, die oudste van die MacDonald-broers, was 'n baie goeie voorspeler; Robert, beter bekend as Wolf, die jongste, was weer 'n befaamde doelwagter. Oom Tommie, Bella se

Urshula Fonseca, Mieta Isaas, Hughie Isaacs, Avril Morden, Roseline Morden, Cecil Harold Morden, Abraham Morden, Louise Louw, Marilyn Morden en Clyde Louw (Morden-versameling).

man, was ook ’n goeie sokkerspeler.

Toe Bella MacDonald en Tommie Lawrence trou, het hulle in Germiston by haar ouma, ant Siesie Jacobs, twee kamers gehuur. Bella en Tommie het in die laat 1960’s na Reigerpark verhuis en in die Enkelkwartiere gewoon. Hulle het twee kamers gehad. Van die enkelkamers is deurgebreek om meer ruimte vir die families te skep. Sommige families het ál vier enkelkamers waaruit een blok bestaan het, bewoon. Bella en Tommie het die plek redelik gevind, maar nie van die gemeenskaplike toiletgeriewe gehou nie. Hulle het toe na Jerusalem verhuis en jare later na Fast Move, waar sy nou nog woon. Tommie is in 2011 oorlede.

Nakkie is in 1953 gebore. Sy het vir ’n ruk by Bella-hulle in die Enkelkwartiere gewoon. Na haar troue het Nakkie en haar man, Russell Erasmus, vir ’n paar jaar in Coronationville, Johannesburg, by haar man se ouma gaan woon. Nakkie beskryf haar eie ma, ouma Meide MacDonald, as ’n moeilike persoon wat baie met háár eie ma, oumagrootjie Jacobs, gebots het. Nakkie was ’n naelloper op laerskool en het aan ’n interprovinsiale skolesportbyeenkoms in Kaapstad deelgeneem. Sy outhou hoe ’n meisie van Johannesburg, een van haar mededingers, haar voor hul vertrek na Kaapstad beseer het deur doelbewus met ’n spykerskoen op haar voet te trap.

Bella en Nakkie outhou hoe Big Fish (Gerald Klaasen) en sy makkers vir Mannetjies, Birds en Jood se broer, vermoor het. Big Fish was die seun van ’n geliefde onderwyseres, juffrou Zini, oorspronklik van Port Elizabeth (Gqeberha). Big Fish is later in die tronk oorlede, glo aan ’n hartaanval. Toe Big Fish op ’n slag in Germistonlokasie gaan moeilikheid soek, het Pat Kloppers hom ’n goeie opstopper gegee! Bella noem dat een van die moeilikheidmakers in Reigerpark, Teddyboy (Henry Kettledas), saam met haar op laerskool was. Volgens Bella was hy nie lid van ’n bende nie, maar baie gewelddadig. Hy moes ook altyd vir die bendelede in Reigerpark vlug. Hy is later die doodvonnis opgelê vir ’n moord wat hy met ’n tuinvurk gepleeg het.

Drie susters: Nakkie Erasmus, Roseline Morden, Bella Lawrence (CH Morden).

Nou volg ’n beskrywing van my pa se stamboom. Morden is nie ’n algemene van in Suid-Afrika nie. Daar is egter heelwat Mordens wat in Kanada woon. Dit skyn of die van sy eerste opwagting in Suid-Afrika gemaak het met die koms van die Britse Setlaars in 1820. ’n Internetsoektog maak melding van Elijah, Mathilda, Abdul en William James Morden in die vroeë Suid-Afrika.[2] Hulle het onderskeidelik in 1859, 1864, 1918 and 1933 gesterf. William James Morden was teen sy sterfte blykbaar in Fort Beaufort woonagtig. My vriend Ockert Fransch stuur laat 2019 vir my ’n foto van ’n grafsteen wat hy in Simonstad se begraafplaas geneem het van Elijah (39 jaar oud)

en Mathilda (47 jaar oud) Morden; hulle was getroud. Haar naam word as Matilda op die grafsteen gespel. Die naam Abdul suggereer dat daar in die vroeë 1900's moontlik 'n persoon van kleur met die van Morden was. Daar is egter geen inligting beskikbaar hoe oupa Joe Morden aan dié van gekom het nie.

Nelson Mandela, Bonny O'Connor en Cecil Morden (Morden-versameling).

Oupa en ouma Morden het mekaar in Brakpan ontmoet. Beide was weeskinders sonder broers of susters. Oupa Morden kom waarskynlik van iewers uit die Vrystaat. Ouma Morden, gebore op 7 April 1909, het op 'n kleinhoewe tussen Nigel en Heidelberg by ouma Lena Tetotsi grootgeword. Ouma Lena het drie kinders van haar eie gehad: oom Petrus, ant Betty en ant Panna. Oupa Morden het in die vroeë 1930's by die myn op Modderbee gaan werk. Ouma Morden het as huishulp gewerk en in 'n buitekamer by haar werkgewers gebly. Koos, my pa Abraham se jongste broer, onthou 'n foto van 'n (wit) paartjie met die van Jansen wat moontlik 'n verbintenis met ouma Morden gehad het. Ouma en oupa Morden het ses kinders gehad, drie seuns en drie dogters. My pa was die oudste van die Morden-sibbe, gebore op 2 April 1932. As getroude vrou het ouma Morden wasgoed by haar klante gaan haal en by haar huis in Modderbee gewas. Vir 'n tyd lank het sy ook die mynbestuurder se wasgoed gewas. My pa en ouma Morden het gereeld vir ouma Lena gaan besoek, eers op die kleinhoewe buite Nigel en later in Tsekane, Brakpan. Ek onthou enkele van hierdie besoeke en die misvloere van die huisie op die kleinhoewe. Pappa het gereeld vir ouma Lena kruideniersware met die polisievoertuig geneem. Ousus, Pappa se suster Sophie, het soms met die trein tot op Heidelbergstasie gereis en daarna 'n lang ent gestap om by ouma Lena te gaan kuier.

Oupa Morden het kort na Koos se geboorte in 1947 gaan seep koop, sy gesin agtergelaat, en op Modder East gaan woon. My pa moes inspring om die gesin te onderhou. Toe die myne in Benoni begin afskaal, het die Morden-gesin in 1952, sonder hul pa, vanaf Modderbee na Syrian Town in Benoni verhuis. Daar het hulle 'n jaar of twee in gehuurde agterkamers gewoon. Ant May, van Steve se Slaghuis in Reigerpark, het oorkant hulle in Syrian Town gewoon. My pa het eers by SA Glazing gewerk en in 1953 by die Polisiediens aangesluit. In laat 1953 het die Morden-gesin na Germistonlokasie verhuis, waar my pa sy eerste pos as polisiebeampte beklee het. Hulle het eers 'n paar kamers by Trafina, 'n swart vrou, in Vyfdestraat gehuur voordat hulle omtrent vyf jaar later na Twaalfdestraat verhuis het. In Vyfdestraat was hul huis naby dr. Bloem se spreekkamer. Koos het vir 'n ruk lank dr. Bloem se medisynebottels vir sakgeld gewas. My pa was toe die broodwinner en het die septer in die huis

geswaai. Volgens Koos het Pappa sy twee broers en drie susters, gedissiplineer, of in sy woorde, "goed gewoel"!

Oupa Morden het 'n paar jaar later in Germiston opgedaag, maar moes toe by sy dogter, ant Koekie (Rebecca) gaan woon. Koos, wat nog toe by die huis was en by my pa as boodwinner oorgeneem het, het nie kans gesien om sy pa na soveel jare weer by die huis te hê nie. Ouma Morden was dit eens met Koos, gegewe die feit dat haar vervreemde man nie te gesond was nie. ('n Interessante brokkie wat Koos onthou, is dat die mynhospitaal op Modderbee later in die Modderbee-gevangenis omskep is.)

Antie Florence, my pa se jongste suster, het by die Ramseys in Vierdestraat, Parktown, Benoni, grootgeword. Oupa Morden en die handige oom Ramsey was goed bevriend. Die Ramseys het haar as hul eie kind grootgemaak om vir ouma Morden te help omdat Florence en Koos net elf maande uit mekaar gebore is. Sy het boonop 'n spraakgebrek gehad en spesiale aandag benodig. Toe sy 13 jaar oud was in standerd ses in 1959, het die Ramseys Germiston toe verhuis. Blykbaar wou die Indiërhuiseienaar die huur buitensporig verhoog en oom Ramsey was nie daarvoor te vinde nie. Ouma Morden het hulle gehelp om blyplek in Germiston te kry.

Aunt Florence het in Parktown skoolgegaan. Sy sê dat van die onderwysers haar stief behandel en gekoggel het weens haar spraakgebrek . Dit het so sleg gegaan dat oom Ramsey eendag een van haar onderwysers in Harry, die Chinees se winkel, geklap het. 'n Onderonsie met mnr. Koemersamy het daartoe bygedra dat sy die skool in standerd ses verlaat het. Hy het haar eendag gekoggel en twee keer geklap. Ouma Ramsey het die volgende dag by die hoof, mnr. Carr, gaan kla. Die hoof het mnr. Koemersamy ingeroep en aangespreek, wat haar daarna in die klas heeltemal geïgnoreer het. Die gekoggelry en die 'verwerping' kon sy nie hanteer nie en het die skool verlaat. Toe hulle kort daarna Germiston toe verhuis, het sy in 'n klerefabriek gaan werk. Ant Florence is 'n paar keer geopereer, waarvan die laaste in Coronation Hospitaal op 23-jarige ouderdom was. Al die operasies het haar gesplete verhemelte net gedeeltelik herstel.

Ousus, Sophie, was met Pilla Januarie getroud en hul oudste dogter Daphne is in Parktown gebore. Ousus se tweede dogter, Doreen, het gesterf terwyl sy nog klein was. Haar derde dogter is Charmaine. Ousus het later van Pilla geskei en met verloop van tyd met Oscar George getrou. Twee kinders, Edwin en Felicity, is uit hierdie huwelik gebore. Daphne het by ouma Morden gebly totdat sy standerd 8 voltooi het.

Dougie, my pa se ander broer, was baie ondeund en is vroeg uit die skool. Hy het hom gedurigdeur aan al wat kwajongstreek was skuldig gemaak. Een Sondag het hy na 'n gestryery met Koos 'n klomp dasse geneem, dit in 'n tou gebind en hom helder oordag aan 'n groot druiweboom probeer ophang. Vir al hierdie drama het hy 'n goeie loesing van my pa gekry. Hy het skool in standerd vier verlaat en in 'n skoenfabriek gaan werk. Toe Dougie en ant Louise Reigerpark toe trek, het hulle aan die begin in Zwanestraat, Stirtonville, gebly. Hulle het later Gousblomstraat toe getrek.

Koos het op Germiston skoolgegaan. Die meeste van die onderwysers was toe van Johannesburg; mnr. Solomons was die hoof. Mnr. Pailman was nie 'n "lekker" onderwyser nie en het hulle baie geslaan. Toe dié onderwyser hom eendag weer slaan en boonop sy nuwe baadjie skeur, het hy by sy oudste broer gaan kla. Dié het toe die onderwyser 'n paar opstoppers gaan gee. Nie lank daarna nie het Koos die skool verlaat en vir 'n vakleerling as meubelmaker *(cabinet maker)* gaan inskryf. Die fabriek was in Cleveland en hy moes klasse in City en Suburban bywoon. Hy het sy vakleerlingskap suksesvol in 1964 voltooi.

Ant Koekie is ook vroeg uit die skool. Sy het tot 'n groot mate bygedra dat die Morden-gesin in Germiston by die AGS-kerk aangesluit het; my pa se vriendskap met oom Seunas, my ma se oom, was

die ander bydraende faktor. Toe ant Koekie wou trou, het die kerk waaraan hulle toe behoort het, die Ou Apostoliese Kerk, daarop aangedring dat sy met 'n lidmaat van die kerk trou. Haar kêrel was nie 'n lidmaat nie. Ouma Morden het haar dogter ondersteun en dit was die einde van hul lidmaatskap van daardie kerk. Toe ant Koekie en oom James Varrie Reigerpark toe trek, het hulle eers in Ramashalastraat, Stirtonville, gewoon en later in Little Germiston.

Mev. en past. Khan, past. Matroos, Abraham Morden en Hughie Isaacs (Morden-versameling).

My ouers was jarelange vriende met oom Jayrum en ant Meisie Singh, 'n Indiërpaartjie. As kinders het ons gereeld oor en weer by die Singhs gekuier. Pappa het vir oom Jayrum op Modderbee ontmoet. Oom Jayrum se pa, Motty Singh, het ook op die myn gewerk. Nadat Pappa Germiston toe verhuis het, het oom Jayrum later by hom aangesluit, maar hulle moes in die Indiërdeel van die lokasie gaan woon. Ons het in 1965 Reigerpark toe getrek en oom Jayrum-hulle 'n paar jaar later terug Benoni toe, na die Indiërbuurt Actonville.

Ant Florence, Koos, en 'n vriend uit die Kaap, Freddie, het op Oukersaand 1971, 'n Vrydag, in 'n geveg met bendelede betrokke geraak. Die aanloop tot hierdie geveg was toe 'n bendelid op Oos-Randstasie vir ant Florence op haar boud geklap het. Sy het haar gewip en hom streng aangespreek. Sy was toe verloof aan ene Edwin. Later die aand toe sy by ant Daphne en oom Chris Arendse gaan kuier, het dieselfde bendelid, ene Fetsou, en van sy makkers daar verbygeloop. Hulle het haar gesien en wou haar aanrand. Koos en Freddie het met oom Jayrum se nuwe motor uit Germiston by sy broer Dougie, wat nie ver van die Arendse af gewoon het nie, gekuier. Hulle het 'n geraas gehoor en vir Florence gaan help. My pa het kort daarna op die toneel afgekom en sy sibbe te hulp gesnel. Ant Florence het daardie aand 'n bendelid met haar hoëhakskoen bygedam. Pappa, Koos en Freddie het net 'n paar ligte wonde opgedoen soos hulle die bendelede afgeweer het.

Na daardie insident het Koos hom voorgeneem om nooit Reigerpark toe te verhuis nie. Hy en sy vrou met wie hy toe getroud was, antie Blaudie, asook ouma Morden, het in die laat 1970's na Withok, Brakpan, wat later tot Geluksdal hernoem is, getrek. Geluksdal het later heelwat uitgebrei, veral toe Atlas, 'n filiaal van die wapenvervaardiger Denel, daar huise vir sy werkers gebou het. Ant Florence het later met Kay Budu van Nigel getrou. Sy ma was 'n Zoeloe en sy pa 'n Indiër. Toe die Ramseys Reigerpark toe verhuis, het hulle eers in Ramashalastraat, toe in Maobanestraat, Stirtonville en later in Fastmove gewoon.

Pappa het by die polisie op Germiston, 'n tyd lank vir die veiligheidspolisie, tot ongeveer 1969 gewerk en daarna 'n oorplasing na Boksburg gekry. Hy het in 1992 as sersant uitgetree. Tydens sy diens as speurder in Reigerpark, vanaf 1970 tot 1992,

Standerd 3, Reigerpark Laerskool, 1966. Cecil Morden, tweede van regs in die agterste ry. Mnr. Graham Musson regs in die agterste ry is die klasonderwyser (Morden-versameling).

het hy 'n betekenisvolle bydrae gelewer om die bendegeweld in die gebied onder beheer te probeer kry. Hy is alom gerespekteer en sommige inwoners in die gebied het na hom as ''die oom met die hoed'' verwys. Sy salaris was blykbaar nie te watwonders nie, want hy het baiemaal tydens sy jaarlikse verlof by Otis Lifts in Wadeville gewerk om 'n paar ekstra sente te verdien. Op 'n slag het hy begrafnispolisse verkoop. Toe ek op hoërskool was, het ek vir 'n paar maande met die trein tot op Driehoekstasie gereis om die weeklikse polisgeld by Doves in Germiston te gaan inbetaal.

As kinders het ons 'n redelike sorglose lewe in Germiston gehad. Ons het genoeg gehad om te eet en was salig onbewus van die stryd wat my ouers en grootouers moes deurmaak om die pot aan die kook te hou en vir 'n dak oor ons koppe te sorg. Later sou ons tot die besef kom hoe broekskeur dit soms gegaan het. My oudste suster vertel toe sy haar eerste salarisstrokie vir my pa in die laat 1970's wys, hy laat blyk het dat sy op daardie stadium meer as hy verdien het, en sy was 'n klerk met 'n standerd agt-sertifikaat.

Op Germiston was my pa bevriend met my ma se ooms. Hy het onder hul invloed tot bekering gekom. Hy, sy ma, en broers en susters het later toe ook getroue lidmate van die AGS geword. Die kerk het 'n baie belangrike rol in ons gesinslewe gespeel; dit is tot vandag toe die geval, alhoewel verbintenisse, verhoudings en gesindhede baie verander het. Ek kan onthou hoe my pa en van die gemeentelede sommige Sondae Paynville (Springs) toe in sy 1958-Chevy gery het om opelug-dienste te gaan hou. Ons het 'n paar keer saamgery. Daar het Pappa-hulle bevriend geraak met oom Alec Liesering en sy gesin. 'n Paar keer het hulle so ver as Standerton gery om dienste te gaan hou. So is jarelange vriendskappe met baie van die gemeentelede gesmee.

Ons is vyf kinders, twee broers en drie susters. Ek

is die oudste en my oorlede broer, André, die jongste. Die drie susters is Louise, Urshula en Avril. André is in Reigerpark op 9 Januarie 1970 gebore en ons ander almal in Germiston. André is net na sy twintigste verjaarsdag in Januarie 1990 in 'n skietvoorval oorlede. In Reigerpark in die laat 1970's het twee dogters by ons kom woon, die een vir 'n hele aantal jare. Al het my ouers nie formeel vir Mieta Miller (getroud Isaacs) en Agatha Saal (getroud Toppendas) aangeneem nie, beskou ons beide as ons susters.

My pa het Mieta ontmoet toe die hof in Boksburg haar na 'n weeshuis wou stuur. Sy was byna tien jaar oud en is toe vir die eerste keer skool toe. Omdat sy soveel ouer as die ander leerders in die laer klasse was, het die onderwysers haar baie rondgestuur en het sy ongelukkig nie ver op skool gevorder nie. Agatha het by 'n paar pleegouers gewoon voordat sy as tiener vir 'n jaar of twee in die laat 1970's by ons kom woon het. Pappa was behalwe polisieman dus ook 'n nie-amptelike welsynbeampte wat graag persone in nood bygestaan het. Dit is hoe ek verstaan Mieta en Agatha by ons uitgekom het. Nodeloos om te sê, sonder Mamma se instemming sou dit nie moontlik gewees het nie; sy help net so graag.

Ek het my laerskoolloopbaan by Germiston Middelbare Skool in 1962 begin. Juffrou Violet Fortuin, my sub B-onderwyseres, onthou ek as iemand besonders. Ons verhuis na Reigerpark in 1965 toe ek in standerd 2 (graad 4) was. Ons het gedurende die skooljaar verhuis en ek moes vir 'n paar maande met een van die onderwysers, mnr. George Jacobs, na Germiston reis om die skooljaar daar te voltooi.

Ons intrek in Irisstraat 26, Reigerpark, was vir my 'n vreugdevolle ervaring. Ons nuwe huis was veel groter as die een in Twaalfdestraat, Germiston, en die omgewing was aangenaam. Die strate was nog nie geteer nie en ons het lekker in die stofstraat gespeel en nuwe vriende gemaak. Die volle impak van die trauma van die Groepsgebiedewet en die sosiale ontwrigting wat dit meegebring het vir baie van die nuwe inwoners van Reigerpark/Stirtonville sou my eers later tref.

Ek begin standerd 3 in 1966 op Reigerpark Primêre Skool. Mnr. Graham Musson was my klasonderwyser. Hy, soos 'n aantal van die ander onderwysers en onderwyseresse, het daagliks vanaf Johannesburg gereis. Dit was die eerste en ook seker die laaste jaar dat ons met inkpenne geskryf het. As gevolg van die vloeibare ink was my werk nie alte netjies nie sodat mnr. Musson my later 'Kol' genoem het. Die jaar eindig op 'n lae noot vir my, want ek het gedruip. Ek herhaal toe standerd 3 in 1967. Dinge verloop veel beter in standerd vier in 1968 met die onderwyser- kunstenaar mnr. Sydney Beck as my klasonderwyser. Wat 'n besonder talentvolle persoon! In standerd 5 was ek in mnr. Talbots Henry se klas, 'n onderwyser van formaat. My paaie kruis ook met dié van menere Bob (Robert) Swarts en William Greeff, beide toegewyde onderwysers.

In 1970 begin my hoërskoolloopbaan op Oosrand Hoër. Ek beland in standerd 6D. Dit was 'n woelige klas en ons seuns was gedurig in die moeilikheid. Ons het 'n 'bende', The Dirty Dozen, gestig met Billy van Ross as ons leier. Ek kan nie onthou dat die 'bende' enige iets vreesliks verkeerd gedoen het nie! Ons was net 'n groep ondeunde seuns. Ek het egter later daardie jaar in die moeilikheid beland toe ek een Saterdag met die gereg gebots en uit vrees 'n verkeerde naam en adres gegee het. Later die middag, na vele gesoek, kom haal my pa my by die polisieselle, daar onder sy neus waar hy self gewerk het. Ten spyte van die feit dat hy tuis nooit geskroom het om ons 'n goeie loesing te gee nie, het hy hierdie slag heel kalm met my gepraat. Dit het by my gebly as 'n belangrike lewensles.

As jong seuns het ons graag sonder ons ouers se toestemming of wete op die mynhope wat Reigerpark omring het, gaan speel. Ons het ook

soms in die Cinderelladam gaan swem en ek was een keer, ja, net een keer, saam met 'n groep vriende na die 'duikgat' in die rigting van die N17, 'n ent agter een van die mynhope. Dit was prettig, maar baie riskant. Oorkant die Cinderelladam was De Wet se 'plaas'. Hy het voorheen 'n kleinhoewe gehad wat later deel van Reigerpark geword het. Ons het soms gansies by De Wet gaan koop en daarmee op die dam gespeel.

As kind het ek nie veel aan sport deelgeneem nie. Een moontlike rede was dat die kerk enige deelname aan sport op Sondae ontmoedig het en die ander rede sou ek eers in 1985 agterkom. Ek het daardie jaar aansoek vir 'n werk by die WNNR gedoen en moes vir 'n oogtoets gaan. 'n Paar maande later moes ek op die jonge ouderdom van 29 'n katarakoperasie op een van my oë ondergaan. Die katarak op die ander oog is vier jaar later verwyder. Ek was dus seker van kleins af ietwat swaksiende sonder dat iemand dit agtergekom het. Dis moontlik die rede waarom ek die sokkerbal so misgeskop en toe maar opgegee het om sokker of rugby te speel.

Onderwysers op hoërskool wat 'n besonder positiewe impak op my gehad het, was mnr. Davie Wathen (standerd 6, Afrikaans). Dit is hy wat my die bynaam Matjoppie gegee het. Ek kon nooit uitvind waarom juis dié naam nie. Dan was daar mnr. Vincent Opperman (standerd 6, Biologie), mnr. Ernest Usher (standerd 8, Wetenskap), mnr. Oscar Sithole (standerds 8 en 9, Rekeningkunde), mnr. James (Jim) Abrams (matriek, Rekeningkunde), en mnr. RC Billings (matriek, Wiskunde). Ek salueer ook al die ander onderwysers wat met soveel toewyding vir ons skoolgehou het. Daar was juffrouens Hanna Wathen (die hoof, mnr. Johnny Wathen se vrou), Jennifer Olliër en Vivienne Pennington.

'n Onderwyser wat ek wil uitsonder is mnr. Billings, nie net vir die knap wyse waarop hy klasgegee het nie, maar ook vir die tyd wat hy bereid was om ná skool vir ons te help. In my matriekjaar het mnr. Billings nooit moeg geraak toe ek hom met my wiskundevrae gepla het nie. Behalwe sy vakkundigheid was hy ook 'n omgeemens. Met sy bystand en toegewydheid kon ek daarin slaag om 'n A in Wiskunde in matriek te kry.

In Germiston was my ma 'n tuisteskepper. Toe ons na Reigerpark verhuis, moes sy gaan werk om te help om die groter huishoudelike uitgawes te dek. Sy het vir 'n paar jaar (1966 tot 1969) by Elegant Travel Goods, 'n tassefabriek, in George Gogh gewerk. Na André se geboorte het sy vir 'n paar maande by Bristol Myers in Wadeville gewerk en daarna, vanaf Januarie 1971 tot met haar aftrede in 1998, by Glaxo, eers in Wadeville en toe in Midrand. As kinders het ons die jaarlikse kerspartytjies by Glaxo geniet. Glaxo het ook later vir een jaar tot my studie-uitgawes bygedra.

Soos ek hierdie relaas begin skryf, op 16 Desember 2020, onthou ek van 'n klein aktetas wat ons in my pa se hangkas gevind het na sy onverwagte sterfte op 9 Desember 2011, 'n paar maande voor sy tagtigste verjaarsdag. Ek het deur hierdie aktetas gegaan vir die eerste keer in die nege jaar sedert sy dood. Ek het geweet dit het 'n paar foto's en moontlike verslae bevat van die sake wat hy hanteer het. Dit was meestal net ongeïdentifiseerde foto's. Ek erken een moordsaak wat hy ondersoek het, die sogenaamde kruiwamoord in 1990. Van die foto's is gru en ontstellend. Ek weet nie hoe hy sulke tonele keer op keer in "lewende lywe" kon aanskou nie. Sy ondersoeke was deeglik en hy kon meestal die verdagtes in hegtenis neem. Hy het 'n hele aantal moorde ondersoek en daarin geslaag om die skuldiges aan die pen te laat ry.

Ek hou op skryf en gaan steek 'n vuurtjie aan waar ek toe al die grufoto's uitbrand. En so kom daardie hoofstuk aan 'n einde. Hy het nie daarin geslaag om die bendes hok te slaan nie. Meer as net 'n knap speurder is nodig om die bendes en ander geweld te stuit. Op die oog af, en teen die einde van

die jaarlikse 16 dae van aktivisme vir geen geweld teen vroue en kinders, blyk dit dat dinge nie veel verbeter het sedert sy uittrede in 1992 nie. Die hoop beskaam nie, maar hoop alleen gaan ons nie ver bring nie.

As kind het ek maar min van politiek geweet of my daaraan gesteur. Die Verteenwoordigende Kleurlingraad (VKR) se verkiesing op 30 September 1969 toe ek in standerd 5 was, het vir ons as kinders grootliks ongesiens verbygegaan. Met die tweede VKR-verkiesing op 19 Maart 1975 was ek 'n groentjie op universiteit. Dié keer het ek die verkiesing aktief geboikot en saam met my medestudente betoog teen hierdie instelling. Die VKR-gebou was net langsaan die UWK-kampus en het later deel van die universiteit geword.

Ek matrikuleer in 1974 en is in 1975 saam met 'n hele aantal studente van Reigerpark na die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland om verder te gaan studeer. Die jare 1975 tot 1979 het vir ons as studente nuwe horisonne geopen. Dit was wonderlik om studente van regoor Suid-Afrika en Namibië, toe nog Suidwes-Afrika, te ontmoet. Gesprekke oor politieke, maatskaplike en ekonomiese vraagstukke was aan die orde van die dag (en menige nag!), beslis baie leersaam en verrykend. Daar was ook baie geleenthede vir vermaak, ontspanning en studentwees vir my en baie ander studente wat vir die eerste keer op hostel gebly het. Dit is ook hier waar ek my kampusliefde en sielsgenoot, Marilyn Meyer van Genadendal, ontmoet het. Toe gebeur Junie 1976 en politieke opstande kom wyd voor.

Ek begin onderwys op Oosrand Hoërskool in Januarie 1980. Dit was 'n jaar waarin daar heelwat politieke en ander woelinge in veral bruin skole regoor die land was. My ondervinding op UWK het my voorberei om 'n bydrae in skoolverband te maak. In die lig van die gebeure van die laat 1970's het van die leerlinge 'n groter politieke bewussyn gehad as toe ek op skool was. Met my geliefde wat toe op Genadendal onderwys het, het my kop terug Kaap toe gestaan. Ek het in Januarie 1981 'n pos by die Skiereilandse Technikon, vandag die Kaapse Skiereiland Universiteit vir Tegnologie, aanvaar. Ons het in Desember 1981 getrou, tot Maart 1985 in die Kaap gebly waarna ons na Reigerpark verhuis het. Die jare 1985 tot 1996 het ons eers in Reigerpark en vir die laaste drie jaar in Freeway Park, Boksburg, gewoon.

Hierdie periode was besonders in baie opsigte. Na die stigting van die Oosrandse Alumnivereniging in Desember 1985 het ek die geleentheid gehad om saam met baie ander betrokke te raak in gemeenskapsprojekte. Die fokus was op onderwys, voorskools tot tersiêr. Ons het ook geleenthede vir debatte geskep deur gassprekers uit te nooi. Daar was ook geleenthede vir ontspanning as 'n groep. Ons het begin stap, en 'n hele paar staptogte in veral Mpumalanga en Limpopo onderneem. Vir 'n tyd lank het die Oosrandse Alumnivereniging 'n jaarlikse beroepsvoorligtingweek by Oosrand Hoërskool aangebied, waar Kevin Ehrenreich die leiding geneem het. Dan was daar ook 'n klein beursfonds wat 'n paar studente bygestaan het met hul tersiêre studies, onder leiding van Yvette Nicol en Elsie Kock. Die voorskoolsentrum was vir 'n tyd lank die kroonjuweel van die aktiwiteite van die Oosrandse Alumnivereniging. Dr. Anthony (Tony) Andrews en ant Lilly Plaatjies het hier die voortou geneem. Na ant Lilly se uittrede het Lynn Andrews as prinsipaal oorgeneem en ná haar, juffrou Vivienne Thompson (geb. Simons).

Ek het ook vir 'n tyd lank op die bestuur van die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Raad vir Alkoholisme en Afhanklikheid van Verdowingsmiddels (SANRA) Reigerpark gedien. Hier het ek onder andere saam met mnre. Simon Wangra, Barold Moosa en Pieta Jooste gewerk. Ek was vir 'n jaar lank, 1987-88, Amerika toe met 'n USAiD/Aurora beurs om verder te gaan studeer en my vrou Marilyn in 1990-91.

Toe ons die tiende bestaansjaar van die Oosrandse Alumnivereniging in 1995 vier, was daar

al tekens dat die organisasie verby sy piek was. Hoe anders as toe ons die vyfjarige bestaan in 1990 gevier het, toe die entoesiasme sommer nog hoog was! In 1988 het van die lede van die Oosrandse Alumnivereniging, onder andere Henry (Bok) Jeffreys, dr. Billy Jacobs en Danny Cassell, aktief by die Save Boksburg Committee betrokke geraak. Hier het adv. Mahomed Navsa die leiding geneem.

Ek was ook vir drie jaar (1993 tot 1995) by die Reiger Park Civic betrokke, wat begin is as die Krisiskomitee, onder leiding van Winnie Bosman en George Peters.

Met die aanloop tot en veral na die 1994 algemene verkiesing het heelwat gesinne uit Reigerpark na omliggende, voorheen wit, gebiede verhuis. Dit was eerstens 'n refleksie van hoe oorbevolk Reigerpark was, en die gevolglike gebrek aan behoorlike behuising vir baie. Dan was daar die behoefte by sommige om in 'n meer gegoede deel van die dorp te gaan bly. Hierdie scenario's het regoor die land afgespeel. Daar gaan nog baie gedebatteer en geskryf word oor die impak van hierdie "migrasie" op gemeenskappe en tot watter mate die "verlies" aan rolmodelle gemeenskappe van kleur negatief (dalk selfs positief?) beïnvloed het.

In Desember 1996 het ons Kimberley toe verhuis en in 2001 Pretoria toe, as gevolg van werksgeleenthede. Gevolglik het ek tot 'n groot mate kontak met baie vriende in Reigerpark verloor. Na ons uittrede het ons in Desember 2017 terug Boksburg toe getrek. Die sirkel is nou voltooi.

Die jaar 2020 was in baie opsigte moeilik en uitdagend. Ek, my vrou en ons jongste dogter het op 19 Desember 2020 positief vir Covid-19 getoets. My ma, twee susters en 'n niggie het 'n paar dae vroeër daardie week ook positief getoets. Min het ons geweet dat ons midde-in die tweede golf van die virus in Suid-Afrika was. Die skoksterftes van drie vriende vroeg in Januarie 2021 was moeilik om te begryp en te verwerk. Ons familielede het met die genade van ons liewe Heer heeltemal herstel. Ek kon eers maande later hierdie skrywe hervat.

Reigerpark is 'n veerkragtige gemeenskap wat baie uitdagings trotseer het. Probleme soos 'n tekort aan bekostigbare behuising, beperkte sosiale en sportgeriewe en bendegeweld sal seker nog lank daar wees. Tog was daar vordering. Die rol van die kerke, skole en baie gemeenskapsorganisasies waarvan sommige gekom en gegaan het, maar ander die toets van die tyd deurstaan het, het van Reigerpark 'n besondere gemeenskap gemaak.

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My jare in Reigerpark

Mohamed Shaikh

Eers die Doubles, toe die Stands en eindelik ’n vastrapplek in Fast Move. Drie belangrike bakens op my lewenspad in Reigerpark, elkeen met sy eie herinneringe en vormingsinvloede wat ’n mens kwalik kan ontgroei.

Ons koms na die ou Stirtonville, doer in die jare sestig, was noodgebonde. Anders as die meeste mense wat daarheen verskuif is van omliggende gebiede aan die Oos-Rand onder apartheidswetgewing, was die dood van my pa die hoofrede vir ons skuif vanaf die kleinhoewe by Van Ryn aan die buitewyke van Benoni.

Stirtonville, vroeër die tuiste van swart medeburgers wat na Vosloorus moes wyk, was goed geleë naby die ontluikende nywerheidsgebiede van Boksburg, Benoni en Germiston en was vir my moeder ’n natuurlike aantrekkingskrag. Benewens die voordele van ’n gevestigde bus- en treindiens op die hoofroetes en die moontlikheid van skaflike skole vir haar kroos van sewe, het dit ook die sekuriteit gebied van “baie bekendes wat ook Stirtonville toe verhuis het”, ’n soort netwerk van vriende en kennisse wat ’n geborgenheid kon bied in die onsekerheid van ’n nuwe woonplek met al sy onbekende uitdagings.

Die behuising was allesbehalwe ideaal. Ons huurhuis in die Doubles se Stanbury Circle was in skrille kontras met die welluidende Britse naam. Die rits drievertrekhuise was sonder elektriese krag, met die toiletgeriewe buite in die verste hoek van die erf, meestal ’n gedeelde gerief met die bure. Van ons meubels uit die Van Ryn-huis was te groot vir die knap vertrekke van die Doubles en moes onafwendbaar in die agtererf staanplek vind. Ander meubelstukke het by kennisse herberg gevind, party permanent.

Tussen die piepklein kombuis, ’n eetkamer cum sitkamer en twee slaapkamers het my moeder vir ons ’n gesinslewe probeer uitets. Sy het altyd sielkundig probeer koershou deur met dankbaarheid te verwys na die omstandighede van andere wat erger daaraan toe was. “Kyk maar net om julle,” was haar konsekwente vermaning. En ons hoef nie ver te gekyk het nie: etlike blokke

verder was die Singles wat nuwe betekenis gegee het aan die term *communal living*. Ewe groot gesinne is daar in erge toestande gehuisves in oorbevolkte skakelhuise met stringe buitetoilette waar die wegneememmers 'n konstante walm oor die buurt laat hang het.

Genadiglik was ons verblyf in die Doubles van relatief korte duur. Deur my moeder se knaende versoeke aan die plaaslike behuisingskantoor vir groter akkommodasie om die bo-op-mekaar-lewe van haar gesin te verlig, is ons alternatiewe behuising sowat 'n halwe kilometer verder in die Stands aangebied. Dit was 'n vierkantige woning met 'n verweerde voorstoep, groot skuifraamvensters, 'n skaflike grootte erf en 'n buitetoilet. Ook sonder elektrisiteit. Molefestraat 668 was 'n seskamerwoning, esteties nie baie sag op die oog nie, in die ou styl aan die buitekant afgewerk met sinkplate, maar binne sierlik afgepleister, hoewel die gebrek aan instandhouding in die etlike krake in die mure sigbaar was.

'n Lang gang het die drie vertrekke aan weerskante verbind. Bedags het die sinkplaatdak ritmies met uitsetting en inkrimping gekraak en saans was dit kompleet of die plankvloer van die gang die kraak-geklaag voortsit. Enige verwysing daarna het my moeder gewoonlik begroet met "julle en julle lewendige verbeelding". Ek sou eers baie later besef watter effek dit op ons as kinders sou hê as sy enigsins 'n bangheid daarvoor openbaar het. Maar die ruim vertrekke het meer as vergoed vir al die kwellinge.

Dít was vir ons *home*. Ons grootwordhuis. Die plek waar ons knus in die winter rondom die Jewel-steenkoolstoof as 'n gesin kon saamkoek en die dag se stories en wedervaringe kon deel. Dit was ook die plek waar ons huisreëls opnuut ingeskerp is en waar ons dikwels my moeder se argwaan vir enige oortreding van die reëls ervaar het. Dit voel soos gister dat sy my ouer broer met 'n potdeksel bygedam het terwyl sy besig was om aandete te berei. Belhamel wat hy was (hy is etlike maande gelede oorlede), het hy stukkies van die kombuistapyt aan die kante uitgebreek en ons uit die skadukol van die olielamp daarmee gepeper. Soos die noodlot dit wou hê, het 'n stukkie tapyt die kant van die pot getref waar sy besig was om die gesin se aandete af te rond. Hy het net betyds gekoes of sy gelaat sou waarskynlik 'n permanente wysiging gekry het. Hy het op die koop toe 'n loesing gekry wat hy baie lank sou onthou!

Sy het die dissipline-rieme baie styf vasgehou en nie die roede gespaar nie. Met sewe kinders was dit seker die beste benadering. Die een oomblik was sy ma van teerheid wat aanmoedig en ego streel, maar wanneer die situasie dit vra, kon sy met die onstuitbaarheid van 'n bulterriër haarself laat geld. Dit het ons menige kere aanskou wanneer ons as kinders die onverdraagsaamheid ("julle koelies") en die boeliekant van die inwoners beleef het. Dieselfde onverbiddelike teenstand het ons ervaar wanneer ons saam met skoolmaats by die Cinderelladam (beter bekend as Shady's) wou gaan speel. "Julle soek julle dood daar," het sy vermaan en telkens verwys na die talle drenkelinge wie se lyke in die verlede daar uitgehaal is.

My kinderdae en die grense van jeugpret in Stirtonville (later verdoop na Reigerpark) was altyd getemper deur die groeiende berugtheid vir geweld en misdaad in die woonbuurt. Dit was vir my moeder wat bedags haar huis aan die kinders moes oorlaat 'n groot rede tot angs en kommer. Ons "blikhuis", soos soms na sy sinkplaathuid verwys is, was so halfpad geleë tussen die Doubles, die Singles en Jerusalem wat 'n soort eenheid aan die bopunt van die buurt gevorm het. Laer af, duskant die strook Indiërwinkels, is Galeview en Little Germiston. Ma se Moer (MM) op die verste buitewyke sou later bykom. Om 'n onverklaarbare rede het die winkels 'n soort grens geword tussen die boonste en onderste sones van die woonbuurt, elk met 'n eie skakering van bendes en onverdraagsaamheid. Dikwels het die konflik in straatgevegte rondom ons huis afgespeel – met

knipmesse, kapmesse en tuisgemaakte byle as die middels van beslegting. Die goue reël in ons huis was: wanneer die donker daal, is alles agter slot en grendel en alle siele binnenshuis.

In 'n poging om misdaad in die groter woongebied te beperk, het die plaaslike owerheid bes gegee onder die druk van gemeenskapsleiers om die woonbuurt beter te belig. Die gevolg was 'n rits hoë spreiligte wat Reigerpark saans in 'n soort semidaglig omhul.

Pret en afleiding oor naweke het meestal gewentel rondom fliekvertonings by die gemeenskapsaal op Saterdae (waarvoor ek dikwels 'n paar koeldrankbottels moes verkwansel om die toegangsgeld aan te vul) en sokkerbywoning op Sondae. Reigerpark het sy kwota van uitstekende sokkerspanne opgelewer wat vir hulself naam gemaak het in die amateurliga van die Oos-Rand: Pixie United, Yorkshire FC, Crusaders FC, Spades United en Pirates FC, om maar 'n paar te noem.

Die Oos-Rand het sy kwota bekende sportsterre opgelewer, maar min so bekend soos die legendariese Albert Johanneson, 'n boorling van Germiston, wat met rukke by sy tante, mev. Violet Fortuin, in Reigerpark gekuier het, etlike huise van ons af in Molefestraat (Jerusalem). Ek kan grepe uit my kinderdae onthou waar hy in die straat sokkertoertjies aan die jongspan getoon het. Hy word algemeen beskou as die pionier wat die weg gebaan het vir veral niewit sokkerspelers om in die Britse professionele sokkerliga te speel. Sy tyd by Leeds United word allerweë beskou as die klub se hoogtepunt in Britse sokker in die sestigerjare.

Maar Reigerpark was ook om 'n ander meer heilsame rede bekend in my jeug, as sentrum van onderrig. Oosrand Hoër was die enigste hoërskool van die destydse Departement van Kleurlingsake aan die groter Oos-Rand. Die skool het daarom leerlinge bedien van omliggende gebiede soos Germiston, Alberton, Benoni en Edenvale en ook leerders gelok van Nigel en Springs aan die verre Oos-Rand. 'n Beduidende komponent van die leerkragte was afkomstig van Eersterust in Pretoria. Die skool en sy leerkragte het loshande die grootste vormende invloed in my lewe gehad, as bron van inspirasie sowel as aspirasie. Oor laasgenoemde kan ek mnr. WJ Filander nog hoor asof dit gister was: Ons kan groot drome droom, maar hoe realisties is dit? En: Net jy kan jou drome waar maak; niemand kan dit vir jou doen nie. Met sy aanmoediging en lewendige Geskiedenisklasse het hy altyd gevatte teenargumente gehad wanneer opdragte of huiswerk nie gedoen is nie, soos die geval toe 'n klasmaat die Pinksterweek met al die kerklike verantwoordelikhede as verskoning wou voorhou vir 'n opdrag wat nie ingelewer is nie: "Mooi so, maar die Here sien jy doen nie my werk nie," was sy respons.

Vakinhoudelik kon ons nie vir beter onderwysers vra nie. My passie vir taal en literatuur is onteenseglik in my hoërskooljare geslyp deur ons taalonderwysers se vermoë om die dood uit grammatika te haal en voorgeskrewe werke te verbeeld op maniere wat jou op 'n intellektuele vlug neem. Mnr. Johnny Wathen se geleentheidsklas in letterkunde (hy was toe skoolhoof) oor die tragiese helde in die Afrikaanse letterkunde aan die hand van DJ Opperman se *Periandros van Korinthe* sal my altyd bybly as verrykend. Dit was nie 'n voorgeskrewe werk nie en effens buite die sillabus, maar gewis 'n klas wat my liefde vir taal en letterkunde net verder aangewakker het; waarskynlik ook omdat dit met die lot van Shakespeare se *Hamlet*, 'n ander tragiese held, geresoneer het. Dít was 'n voorgeskrewe werk wat mnr. Basil Cochrane met groot moeite in ons Engels-vreemde harspanne probeer indreun het. Ek onthou hoe 'n klasmaat die storielyn van *Hamlet* in die halfjaarlikse eksamen totaal verkeerd herskep het. Vir effek het hy Hamlet se alleenspraak ("To be or not to be") as slot by sy antwoord ingesluit, maar foutiewelik vermeng met die woorde van die dwalende gees van Hamlet se pa: "Adieu Adieu Remember me!" Mnr. Cochrane se reaksie

was onverbeterlik: "There is nothing worth remembering here… only the biggest concocted version of Hamlet that I have ever seen!"

'n Ander opvoedkundige ligpunt in Reigerpark is die St Anthony's Kerk met sy ruim kursusse in tegniese vakke en loopbaanafronding. Ek sal nooit die prentjie vergeet van die stringe studente wat teen namiddag van Wattville, Vosloorus en elders van Oos-Randstasie na die Sentrum gestroom het vir aandklasse nie. Die ironie was dat relatief min mense van Reigerpark die leergeleenthede wat die Sentrum bied, benut het.

Ons het in my graad 11-jaar Fast Move toe verhuis met die Doubles as ons bure oorkant die pad. Die naam is ontleen aan die gebruik van die groot betonstene wat gebruik is om die huise op te rig. Die gevolg was dat die hele nuwe ontwikkeling teen 'n verbysterende spoed opgerig en voltooi is. Sedert ons koms uit Van Ryn was dit weer die eerste keer dat ons in 'n huis kon woon met elektrisiteit en 'n binnetoilet en badkamer. Dit het 'n goedige gespot by die skool afgegee oor die Fast Movers wat nou kwansuis lank in die badkamer vertoef om hulle aan die wit bad te verkyk!

Die blydskap om my matriekjaar in 'n huis met elektrisiteit te trotseer, was onbegrensd. En die St Anthony-biblioteek, met sy ewig hulpvaardige bibliotekaris mnr. Dennis Esau 'n hanetree van ons huis af, was 'n bonus. Die klas van '75 het nie uitsonderlike prestasies gelewer nie, maar my prestasie was goed genoeg vir toelating tot die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland vir 'n graad in die sosiale wetenskappe. Sedert die voortsetting van my na-matriekstudies het ek om loopbaan en professionele redes Kaapstad my nuwe tuiste gemaak.

As jong joernalis in die tagtigerjare was dit vir my beskore om 'n politieke vergadering in die Reigerpark gemeenskapsentrum by te woon in die storm- en -drangtydperk wat die vorming van die United Democratic Front voorafgegaan het. Die woonbuurt het deur my kinderjare

Derde slagoffer na die graf

Deur
MOHAMED SHAIKH

MET die dood van twee jeugdiges nog sommer vars in die geheue het die onluste in Reigerpark nog 'n droewige spoor nagelaat. Vanmiddag word die derde slagoffer van die onlangse oproer in die Rondebult-begraafplaas ter ruste gelê.

Hy was Arthur "Slade" Alvan, 36, wat tydens die onrus in albei bobene geskiet is. Sy beserings was sodanig dat hy vyf operasies moes ondergaan — een daarvan om sy been by die heup af te sit. Na verneem word, het sy linkerbeen gangreen opgedoen.

Besoekuur

Verlede week het hy skielik begin bloed vomeer en uitskei, het sy verpletterde vroutjie, Dora, 31 vandeesweek gesê. Só erg was dit dat twee tot drie bottels bloed op een slag oorgetap is om sy bloedtoevoer aan te help. Maar vergeefs. Hy is verlede Saterdag tydens die besoekuur oorlede.

Mev. Alvan het vandeesweek gesê toe hulle met besoektyd by die Boksburg-Benoni-Hospitaal opdaag, haar man in 'n spesiale kamer agter skerms was. Hulle is gevra om buite te wag. 'n Rukkie later is hulle meegedeel dat hy oorlede is.

Volgens mev. Alvan was haar man een van die eerste

WYLE ARTHUR ALVAN

omstanders wat in die oproer gewond is. Hy is op Saterdag 9 Mei gewond. Sy sê dat hy goed op behandeling gereageer het totdat komplikasies met die wond in sy linkerbeen ingetree het.

Arthur, 'n sweiser-instrukteur by 'n firma aan die Rand, was 'n geesdriftige sokkerspeler en musiek was sy voorliefde. Hy word vanmiddag om eenuur uit die Rooms-Katolieke kerk in Reigerpark begrawe. Die erediens sal deur 'n diens om twaalfuur by die huis in David Franschstraat voorafgegaan word.

Hy word oorleef deur sy vrou en vier kinders, Petunia, 12, Felicity, 11, Jolene, 7, en Vernine, 9 maande.

Berigte te velde: Mohamed Shaikh berig oor gebeure in Reigerpark in 1981 (*Rapport-Ekstra*, Junie 1981).

interessante en soms formidabele aktiviste en burgerlike leiers opgelewer. Soos altyd het hulle 'n spektrum van politieke denke verteenwoordig, van apartheidsgoedgesindes deur luidrugtige

Afrikaans Stereo 'not only for whites'

■ BY MICHAL SPARKS

Considering the history of the SABC, it may come as a surprise to many Afrikaans Stereo listeners that the newly appointed station manager would have been classified coloured in the old SA.

But Mohamed Shaikh (pictured right) does not believe his colour was a factor and is convinced he was appointed because of his abilities.

"Obviously in the South African context my colour could not be ignored, but I believe I was the best candidate for the position and applied for it like everyone else."

Considering his impressive credentials, which include a master's degree (cum laude) in journalism from the University of Stellenbosch, lecturing in journalism at Pretoria Technikon, and nearly 10 years as a working journalist, that claim appears accurate.

He is presently working in current affairs for the station, a position he will retain until after the local government elections on November 1.

Shaikh said the station had historically catered to the needs of white Afrikaners only, but that is set to change.

"There are so many Afrikaners in this country who are not white, and we need to look at serving all Afrikaans-speakers," he said.

But there will not be an abrupt change with the new order, as, Shaikh said, the changes had already begun.

He hoped the station would produce programming which people could identify with, which would draw in new listeners at a time when new radio stations were starting to broadcast.

But Shaikh said he was not expecting to lose listeners, since the listenership figures for the station had been very stable.

Nuwe geleenthede: Mohamed Shaikh is in 1995 aangestel as die stasiebestuurder van Afrikaans Stereo (*The Star*, Oktober 1995).

draadsitters tot anti-establishment heethoofde. Dit het skouspelagtig by 'n gemeenskapsvergadering uitgespeel waar die destydse Arbeidersparty van eerw. Allan Hendrickse terugvoer gegee het oor waarom hy besluit het om aan die Driekamerparlement deel te neem. Die PW Botha-regering het dit as die nuwe politieke heil vir wit, bruin en Indiërs voorgehou, maar geen voorsiening vir swart mense gemaak nie en bowendien het dit beperkte inspraak aan bruin mense en Indiërs in die sentrale besluitnemingsprosesse van die Nasionale Party-regering gegee.

Die beeldryke menings wat daardie aand in die Reigerpark vergadering gelig is, het vir my die saak klinkklaar aangespreek: "Die grootste pampoen is 'n boerpampoen; die grootste wors is boerewors; die grootste bok is 'n boerbok. Hierdie is die grootste verneukery en kan dus net 'n boereverneukery wees." En verder: Die bruin mense was nog al die jare soos 'n aap wat vasgeketting is aan 'n paal. Nou plaas hulle die aap aan die ketting net bo-op die paal. Dit gee net groter uitsig op die twak wat nou vir ons aangebied word! Die vergadering het by tye gedreig om in wanorde te ontaard. Ondanks die teenstand het die Driekamerparlement vir 'n dekade (tussen 1984 en 1994) die Suid-Afrikaanse politieke besluitnemingslandskap oorheers.

Oor die jare was my tussentydse besoeke aan my familie in Reigerpark altyd soos 'n tuiskoms, en die terloopse ontmoetings met ou skoolmaats en kennisse onafwendbaar gevul met nostalgie. Maar in die jongste jare word ek met elke besoek al hoe meer getref deur die sosiale agteruitgang en verlies aan waardevolle mensepotensiaal. Grootskeepse werkloosheid gekoppel aan dwelm-

Die Shaikh-broers: Mohamed, Goolam en Abdul (Shaikh-versameling).

en alhoholmisbruik, lyk dit my, is besig om 'n gemeenskap van potensiële leiers van binne af te erodeer. Dit laat my onwillekeurig dink aan die fiktiewe verhaal uit die pen van Mary Mapes Dodge oor Hans Brinker, die seuntjie wat sy vinger in 'n gaatjie in 'n dyk geplaas het om te verhoed dat die dyk bars en derduisende mense verdrink. As daar ooit 'n behoefte was vir 'n vinger-in-die-dyk aksie om die mensepotensiaal van veral die jeug in Reigerpark teen verswelging te beskerm, is dit nou.

Die lewe van die mense van Reigerpark is gevul met vonkel, maar ook smaad. En my onthou van my grootwordwoonbuurt is dat daar tussen die slik en mynhope tonne lewe van sieraad en mooiwees floreer. Mag dit vir altyd voortleef en die gemeenskap van Reigerpark dit jaloers bewaar.

November 2020

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My ervaring van Reigerpark

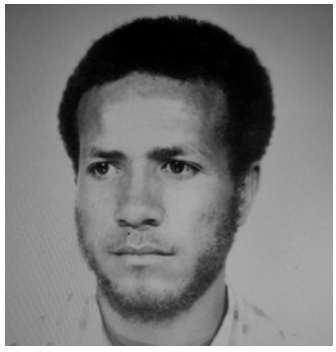
EDWARD HANK

Ek is in Boksburg gebore en het my kinderjare in Benoni deurgebring. Ons gesin het uit my moeder, een suster en twee broers bestaan. My moeder is in State Mines, Brakpan gebore en my vader kom vanaf Herschel in die Oos-Kaap. Ons het in Actonville, Benoni gebly waar ons 'n huis met oom Corrie Steenkamp-hulle gedeel het. Ek het in my kinderjare onder andere aan die Ebenezer, Free Baptist, en AGS-kerke behoort. Ons verhuis na Reigerpark, toe nog bekend as Stirtonville, op 7 Junie 1964, my sewende verjaarsdag. Ons sou graag in Actonville wou aanbly, maar die verhuising was te wyte aan die Groepsgebiedewet van die eertydse apartheidsregering. Boonop het die Benoni stadsraad 'n saak in die hof verloor om die bruin gemeenskap van Actonville te behou.

Die verskuiwing van Actonville se bruin gemeenskap na Reigerpark was 'n groot terugslag en 'n stap agteruit vir ons. Aan die begin, vir 'n lang tyd, was my vriende meestal oorspronklik vanaf Actonville. Toe ons intrek, was daar geen hoërskool nie. Vir ten minste twee jaar moes sekondêre leerlinge daagliks na William Hills Hoërskool in Actonville reis. Groot getalle van die bruin middelklas van Actonville het eerder na Johannesburg, die Kaap, Natal en/of landuit getrek.

Baie huise in Stirtonville het geen elektrisiteit, geen plafon, en geen badkamer gehad nie. In sommige gebiede was die toilette buite. Die huise het slegs een deur na buite gehad. Daar was ook 'n kulturele botsing met die gemeenskap van Stirtonville. Bendes is gevorm en geweld het gereeld opgevlam. Die bendegeweld het amper elke gemeenskaplid geraak. Behalwe die kulturele verskille het die swak sosio-ekonomiese omstandighede tot die geweld bygedra.

Ek het my skoolloopbaan aan die Benoni Kleurling Primêre Skool in Januarie 1964 begin, waar my onderwyseres juffrou Doreen Stapelveldt was. Toe ons in Junie van daardie jaar na Reigerpark verhuis, was ek vanaf Julie tot September in Sub A aan Stirtonville Primêr, nou Goede Hoop Laerskool, en my onderwyseres was juffrou Murice du Preez. Ek het Graad 1 by Reigerpark Primêr in die klas van



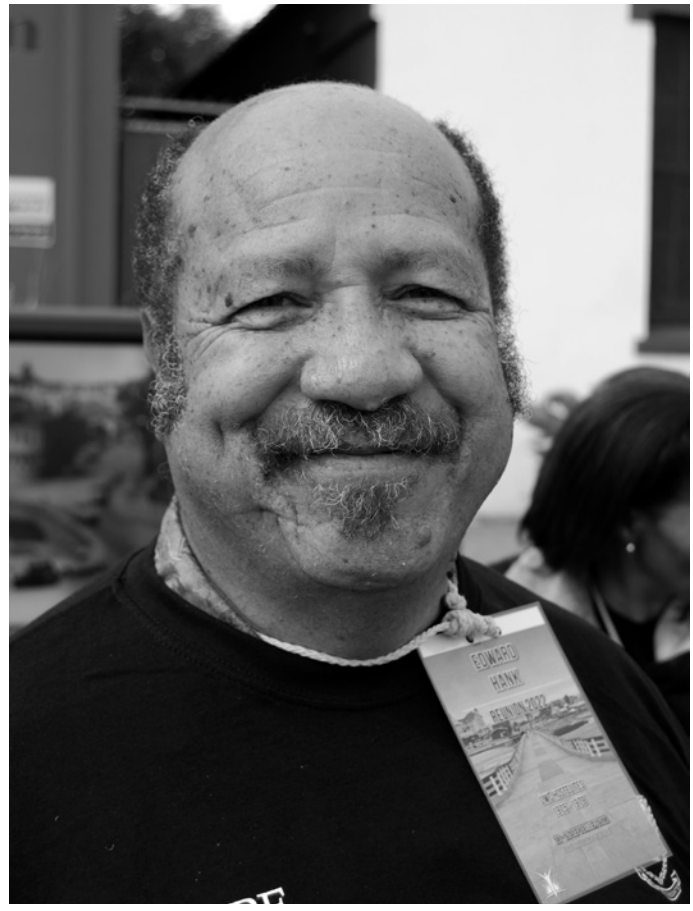
juffrou Mary Collins (getr. Moody) voltooi. Dit was ook die skool waar ek die res van my laerskooljare deurgebring het. Ek het my primêre skooldae terdeë geniet. Ek het st. 6 tot 8 aan Oosrand Hoërskool voltooi, vanaf 1972 tot 1974. Die res van my skoolloopbaan, standerds 9 en 10, het ek aan die Chris J Botha Hoërskool in Bosmont voltooi, vanaf 1975 tot 1976.

Daar was geen publieke biblioteek in Reigerpark tot 1974 nie. Die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk se biblioteek, oftewel die St Anthony-biblioteek, het later hierdie leemte gevul.

Politieke debatte in Reigerpark was maar skraps en het eers stadig in 1969 met politieke figure soos Jac Rabie (Federale Party), Clarence September (Nasionale Party) en Simon Mentor (Arbeidersparty) begin.

Vooruitgang en ontwikkeling in Reigerpark het teen 'n slakkepas plaasgevind, daarvan het die apartheidsregering seker gemaak. Vir tersiêre opleiding moes ons na Johannesburg vir die Randse Onderwyskollege of Bellville vir die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland reis. My politieke denkwyse is grootliks deur die landwyde onluste van 1976, die 1981-onluste in Reigerpark, en die skoolboikotte van 1985 gevorm. My rolmodelle was mense soos mnr. RC Billings, Johnny Issel, Cravin Collis, dr. AD Andrews, en my geestelike leier, Fr Stan Brennan. Fr. Stan was een van die mees betrokke sosiale en opvoedkundige priesters in Reigerpark wat ek ooit in my lewe teëgekom het.

Sokker was die mees algemene sportsoort wat die seuns van Reigerpark gespeel en/of ondersteun



Dr. Edward Hank (Hank-versameling).

het. Ek onthou spanne soos Spades (mnr. E Usher), Pirates (mnr. James Lyons), Rosebuds (mnr. J Hartman), Callies (mnr. Jarrice Shapiro), Orientals (mnr. Douglas Anderson) en Pixie (mnr. Lesley Bobbai Champion). Later het van die jong manne begin rugby speel. Ek onthou spanne soos Pioneers (mnr. S Wangra), Pumas (mnr. Butch Jantjies), Diggers (mnr. Bruce Cochrane), en Athenians (mnr. Abraham Jansen). Sommige ouens het ook geboks, manne soos Albert Moses, A Bashing, Boy Barnes en Bruce Walten. Dan was daar die avontuurklub van mnr. Vivian Solomons, en die St. Anthony's Klub van die Rooms- Katolieke Kerk.

Ek het in 1976 gematrikuleer en my BSc- graad aan UWK in 1977 begin. Ek het my graad aan die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand voltooi.

My studiejare was van die moeilikste tye in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika en die tydperk was seker die begin van die einde van die apartheidstelsel.

Ek begin werk as 'n onderwyser in Wetenskap en Natuur- en Skeikunde vir graad 9 en 12 onderskeidelik aan Oosrand Hoërskool en onderrig ook Wiskunde buitemuurs by die St Anthony-sentrum. Later kwalifiseer ek as tandarts, en praktiseer vir 'n aantal jare in Reigerpark. Daarna kwalfiseer ek as mediese dokter. Ek is tans die mediese superintendent en hoof van ongevalle by Coronation/Rahima Moosa-hospitaal. Ek besoek Reigerpark ten minste een maal per week. My posbusadres is nog in Reigerpark!

Ek is getroud. Ons het 'n seun van 28 jaar oud, 'n elektriese ingenieur (MSc), en 'n dogter van 24 jaar oud. Sy is 'n student, besig met haar MSc in astrofisika aan die Universiteit van Kaapstad.

Reigerpark is 'n dinamiese gemeenskap wat leiersfigure in baie fasette van die samelewing opgelewer het. Behalwe my rolmodelle wat ek vroeër genoem het, is daar mense van formaat soos Butch Jantjies in rugby, Bernard Parker in sokker en Mahomed Navsa in regte, wat die gemeenskap se naam hoog gehou het en dit steeds doen. Teen die einde van 1988 het ek betrokke geraak by die Save Boksburg-komitee onder die leierskap van Navsa en andere. Ons het almal die verbruikersboikot in Desember 1988 ondersteun en kersinkopies in Benoni gedoen. As gevolg van hierdie boikot het 'n aantal besighede in die Boksburg SBD finansieel ondergegaan.

Die toekoms van die mense van Reigerpark lê (nog altyd) op akademiese en ekonomiese front. Dit is bewys met die opkoms van Duitsland en Japan asook die Joodse gemeenskap wat geweldig tydens die Tweede Wêreldoorlog gely het. Die pas van ontwikkeling in Reigerpark is egter 'n saak van kommer. Daar is geen noemenswaardige of volhoubare ekonomiese en sosiale ontwikkeling nie.

23 September 2019

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Kevin van die Kasie
Smaail GP

Kevin Ehrenreich

Ek is in 1950 in Parktown, Benoni gebore. My pa, Martin Frederick Edward Ehrenreich, het in 1925 die Paarl vir die Transvaal verruil. Die droër weer hierbo was beter vir sy bors as die Kaapse klammigheid, en tweedens die onderwysers het twee pond vyftig sjielings per maand meer as hul kollegas in die Kaapkolonie verdien. My pa het byna 65 jaar in die onderwys gestaan, en dit sluit in as hoof en waarnemende hoof by verskillende laerskole aan die Rand. Hele gesinne in Reigerpark, tot vier generasies, het deur sy hande gegaan. Dis nou kind, ouer, grootouer en grootjie. Hy het by Boksburg Kleurlingskool begin, vars uit die Kolonie, en op 80-jarige ouderdom het hy nog afgelos by dieselfde skool. Die skool het later Goede Hoop Primêr geword. My pa het nooit 'n motor besit nie. Hy het vir jare die pad tussen Benoni en Stirtonville met 'n trapfiets aangedurf.

My pa het naam gemaak met sy musiek- en tennisvaardighede. Vir jare was hy die enigste persoon van kleur met musiekkwalifikasies in Transvaal. Behalwe die verskeie skoolkore wat hy afgerig het, was hy ook koorleier van die Ebenezer-Congregational Kerk, eers in Benoni, toe in Stirtonville, later Reigerpark. Sy Mountaineers Tennisklub was die beste aan die Witwatersrand (ook bekend as die Goudrif). Spelers het vanaf Diepkloof en Coronationville na Benoni gereis om in die klub te speel. Dit geld ook die tweede generasielede wat in hul ouers se tennisvoetspore gevolg het.

My pa het met my ma, Irene Sophia du Preez, getrou en ons is twee kinders. Hulle was streng, maar liefdevol. My pa het van klassieke musiek gehou en ons van jongs af daaraan blootgestel. Ek het nog steeds die antieke Murphy-draadloos waarop ons na sy langspeelplate geluister het. My ma is oorlede toe ek nege jaar oud was. My tante, Kathy du Preez, het in Riverlea gewoon. Sy was ook 'n onderwyseres gewees, en het later vir die Rooikruis gewerk. Om as laaitie in die 1950's per trein te reis wat deur 'n kolelokomotief getrek word en tuis te gaan by 'n Rooms-Katolieke klooster in die Vrystaat was 'n wonderlike en onvergeetlike

ervaring wat ek saam met haar tydens haar Rooikruisprojekte beleef het. Sy was ’n steunpilaar in my lewe.

Ek onthou dat Benoni twee bioskope gehad het, die Liberty en The Star. Ons het The Star verkies omdat jy vir ’n sikspens twéé flieke kon sien. Jy moes heel voor op tamatiekissies sit en jy het maklik sommer ’n brandende sigaretstompie in jou hare of op jou rug gekry. Ek het my eerste fliek in kleur, *The Three Musketeers*, in The Star gesien.

Ek onthou nog duidelik hoe my pa ons groen ID-kaarte teruggestuur het Pretoria toe. My pa was “Cape Malay” geklassifiseer, my ma was “Cape Coloured”, en ek my suster nog iets anders. Sy was “Other Coloured” en ek, Kevin Athol Ehrenreich, was as “Coloured” geklassifiseer. Ons was toe vier soorte “Coloureds” in een huisgesin.

Op laerskool in Parktown het ek aan eisteddfods deelgeneem en telkens eerste plek behaal met die uitsondering in standerd 3. Ek het glad nie gedink dat ek ’n loopbaan op die verhoog kon hê nie. Dit was destyds nie in my wildste drome moontlik nie. Van kleins af kon ek my uitleef in kuns wat as vak op die laer- en hoërskool aangebied was. Ek onthou mnr. William Greeff, my standerd 5-klasonderwyser. Hy was ’n briljante man wat ’n hele nuwe wêreld van boeke aan ons bekendgestel het. Hy het vir my oortuig dat alle kennis in boeke opgevat is en so het ek ’n boekwurm geword.

Langsaan ons laerskool was die Indiër laerskool gewees met bekende onderwysers soos Tienie du Preez, Bertha Goliath en Alfred Landsberg.

Op William Hills Hoërskool was ons net ses bruin kinders wat vir A-baan hoërgraad gekwalifiseer het in 1964. Ons het 13 vakke gehad; in nege het jy eksamen geskryf en die ander vier was vir nie-eksamendoeleindes. William Hills was landwyd bekend as ’n topskool. Daar was ’n goed toegeruste wetenskaplaboratorium asook ’n kookkuns- en

Mountaineers se tennisspelers in die 1940’s: Voor: Ivan Petersen, Onbekend, Connel ‘Sak-Sak’ Isaacs, Iris Botha (getr. Kay), Ingrid Sampson, Andrew ‘Bridge’ Miller. Agter: Martin Ehrenreich (Ehrenreich-versameling).

massiewe houtwerksentrum. Als spoggerig. Daar was ook ’n goed toegeruste gimnasium met al die Olimpiese gimnastiektoerusting. Mnr. Samuels, die Afrikaansonderwyser, was ook verantwoordelik vir sport en liggaamlike opvoeding en hy het seker gemaak dat ons al daai toertjies op die gimnastiektoerusting kon baasraak. Ek onthou nog van my oud-onderwysers Colin Samuels, Willie Daniels, Helen Foster, en mnre. Makakoe en Koen, die musiekonderwyser wat ons vir kantates afgerig het. Ons hoof was George Carr.

Ons moes in 1964 na Reigerpark trek as gevolg van die Groepsgebiedewet. Die mense wat in Parktown en Cape Section in twee- of drie-slaapkamerhuise gewoon het, word toe in twee- en drie-vertrekhuise ingeboender. Van drie slaapkamers na drie vertrekke, met die gevolg dat al die meubels nie in die klein huisies van die Singles en Doubles kon pas nie. Ons is letterlik en figuurlik ontwortel en ons bejaardes in daai gedeeltes het van hartseer weggekwyn.

William Hills Hoërskool het ’n Indiërskool geword en mnr. Lingham, ’n Indiërhoof, het mnr. Carr opgevolg. Ons kon nog vir twee jaar aanbly

Martin Ehrenreich en lede van die Mountaineers Tennisklub tydens 'n trofee-oorhandiging in die 1940's (Ehrenreich-versameling).

omdat daar toe nog nie 'n hoërskool tot standerd 10 in Reigerpark bestaan het nie. Ons en die Indiërskoliere van Kalamazoo het elke dag per bus Wm Hills toe gery. In 1967 het ek standerd 9 op Oosrand Hoër begin.

Die nuwe skool was glad nie so goed toegerus soos William Hills Hoërskool nie. Daar was nie genoeg onderwysers nie en ook nie genoeg handboeke nie. Mnr. Manwell Felix was destyds die hoof gewees en hy het rondgeskarrel om aan ons behoeftes te voorsien. Die kinders van die hoër standerds moes inspring en help klasgee in die laer standerds. Ons kon ook nie voortgaan met van die vakke wat op William Hills Hoërskool aangebied is nie. Henry Swanepoel moes elke Vrydag William Hills Hoërskool toe gaan vir houtwerkklasse en dan het hy sy ander klasse misgeloop. Ek en Gabriel Manual moes een keer per week navorsing in Johannnesburg se stadsbiblioteek gaan doen en dan afskrifte maak. Wanneer die wind die dag te veel gewaai het, moes van die klasse sluit vanweë al die stof van die mynhope. In die winter het ons byna verkluim, behalwe as die klas geld bygedra het om 'n sak kole vir die klein stofie in die hoek te koop of elke leerling één stuk steenkool van die huis af saamgebring het.

Daar is onderwysers op Oosrand Hoër wat ek kan uitsonder. Mnr. Raymond Thomas – 'n musikant – was 'n charismatiese en uitstekende aardrykskunde-onderwyser wat figuurlik die maan in die klaskamer gebring het. Ek het ook baie groot waardering vir mnr. Johnny Wathen, my Afrikaansonderwyser wat ook die hoof was. Hy het in ons straat gewoon en soms het hy vir ure NP van Wyk Louw en ander digters uit *Groot verseboek* met my bespreek as gevolg van die groot liefde wat ons twee vir die Afrikaanse letterkunde gedeel het. Mnr. Jim Abrams het Engels in matriek aangebied. Hy het *Julius Caesar* so lewendig gemaak dat dit vir my geïnspireer het om al Shakespeare se werke te lees. Ek het sommer stukke gememoriseer. Jare later het my voordragte uit Shakespeare tydens die Nasionale Kunstefees vir my gratis drankies in Grahamstad se kroeë besorg!

Mannekaai, die Maggelaaiman van Germiston, het 'n belangrike saadjie in my lewe gesaai. Hy was 'n *magic man* wat maggelaai by ons laerskool in Benoni in die laat 1950's en vroeë 1960's gedoen het. Hy was een van min ooms in die destydse Transvaal wat *magic* gemaak het. Hierdie *magic* mense kon 'n hasie uit 'n hoed optower en vuur eet. Goëlaars, towenaars, magiërs: hulle was fassinerende mense. Hulle het die mooiste wêreld aan die kinders geopenbaar, 'n sprokieswêreld sonder geweld! Ek het myself belowe dat ek eendag hierdie sprokieswêreld aan mense gaan ontbloot, al sou dit deur middel van 'n ander medium wees. Soos Walt Disney gesê het, "If you can dream it, you can do it!"

Sowat 'n dekade gelede het ek die kans gehad om 'n onderhoud met Moira Billings, jongste dogter van Mannekaai, die Maggelaaiman, om 'n vuurtjie te voer. By haar het ek haar pa se regte naam gehoor: Stanley Billings. Hy het hom in Fietas in sy bedryf bekwaam by 'n Moslemonderwyser met die naam van Kardoni. Saam met sy manlike pop, Connie, het Mannekaai wyd getoer. Jare later het die tas met Connie daarin by 'n taxi uitgeval waarna 'n kar daaroor gery het. Dit was 'n groot

slag vir Mannekaai. Sy slang Merci, wat ook 'n deel van sy toertjies was, is tydens 'n vertoning deur 'n polisieman in Turton Hall (in Dukathole) doodgeskiet.

Vir Moira was haar pa se vuurspuugtoertjie die indrukwekkendste. Hy het twee swart stokke met wit punte en twee vlaggies vooraan aan die brand gesteek en dan die vuur in sy mond gesit. Dan dans die vlamme op sy tong terwyl die skare angstig toekyk, totdat hy skielik 'n groot bol vuur die lug instuur. Moira onthou dat haar suster Sheila gedurende sy toertjies haar pa se *sleeping lady* was. Stanley Billings was 'n regte maggelaaiman, die laaste *original* van sy era. Hy het diep spore in die vermaaklikheidswêreld getrap in 'n tydperk toe sy velkleur 'n *handicap* was. Ek is trots op hom, die Wonderman van Germiston 'Kasie.

Alec Jansen, die hoof van William Hills Hoërskool, en tennisspelers van die Mountaineers Tennisklub (Ehrenreich-versameling).

Ek moes my matriekjaar in 1969 herhaal. Ek het vir Johnny Issel, wat toe al 'n paar jaar terug sy matrieksertifikaat behaal en as klerk by ons Reigerparkse poskantoor gewerk het, oorreed om saam met my terug te gaan skoolbanke toe met die oog op universiteitstoelating. Ek en Johnny was by heelwat politieke bedrywighede betrokke. Desmond van der Water, 'n vriend van ons, het vir ons langspeelplate van Martin Luther King jr. geleen wat hy by 'n vriend gevra het en waarna ons in die geheim in 'n verlate huis in Gousblomstraat geluister het, want die besit van sulke langspeelplate was onwettig gewees. Sonny Leon wat destyds die leier van die Arbeidersparty was, het 'n groot indruk op ons gemaak. Jac Rabie van die Federale Party was die Talleyrand van die destydse politiek.[1] Ek en Jaybaai, dit was Johnny se bynaam, het met die 1969-verkiesing 'n boikotaksie teen die VKR geloods. Ek het respek gehad vir manne soos Willie Volmink, Georgie du Plessis en Sonny Leon, maar ek dink Allan Hendrickse van die Arbeidersparty het alles opgemors.

Ek, Ambrose du Plessis, Roderick Jacobs en Henry Swanepoel het toestemming by mnr. Clarence September, die hoof van Reigerpark Laerskool, gekry om saans in een van die klaskamers te studeer. Daar het ek, Johnny en Ambrose skelmpies politieke biljette op my pa se hand-afrolmasjientjie afgerol en dit dan in die middel van die nag by mense se posbusse gaan indruk. Daardie middernagtelike aktiwiteite is beëindig toe ons die roller van die afrolmasjientjie in die klaskamer vergeet het, en toe die veiligheidspolisie ons begin dreig het. Oom Abraham Morden het omgekom na ons huis toe. Hy het toe vir die Veiligheidspolisie gewerk. Hy het my duidelik laat verstaan: sien af van jou politieke oortuigings, of kry jou matriekuitslae voor die tyd! Hierna het die laerskool se deure vir ons toegeklap. Ons moes toe 'n ander heenkome vir ons studiesessies vind. Eerw. Harold Brooks van die Metodiste Kerk het sy konsistorie beskikbaar gestel. Maar die politieke gesprekke het deel van elke studiesessie gebly.

Eerw. Brooks het een Sondag vir dr. Beyers Naude, wat bekend was as 'n anti-apartheidsleier, as gasspreker na sy nederige sinkkerkie uitgenooi. Die volgende dag het oom Abraham en sy kollegas, grootgeboude wit veiligheidspolisiemanne,

intimiderend deur die kerkie gestap en kliphard aanmerkings gemaak oor die leesstof wat hulle daar gesien het. Ek het jare later 'n vriendskapsverhouding met oom Abraham opgebou en so ook met ál my skoolonderwysers. Dit is eers toe dat ek een van my pa met sy omgee-geaardheid se gesegdes begin verstaan het: "Ondervinding is die moeder van wysheid."

Ek dink ek en Johnny se grootste politieke bydrae was die beëindiging van die sing van die "Die Stem" by al die plaaslike skole. Selfs Bok Jeffreys het in een van sy koerantartikels melding gemaak van die oomblik in st. 9 toe twee jong aktiviste by sy klaskamer ingestorm en gekeer het dat hulle "Die Stem" sing. Ek was destyds 'n offisier in die Seunsbrigade en ek het ook dáárdie seuns ontmoedig om die lied te sing. Ons, ek en Johnny, was nie net polities aktief nie. Ons het ook 'n atletiekklub begin en ons span het aan 'n aantal kompetisies deelgeneem. In 1966 is ons as Sondagskoolonderwysers by die Ebenezer-Congregational Kerk opgetrek. Ek het selfs in 1970 vir die eerste rugbyspan in Reigerpark genaamd Athenians met mnr. Simon Wangra as stigter en afrigter gespeel, maar daardie aspirasies was van korte duur nadat ek teen die mynspan helder oordag die melkweg gesien het, te wyte aan twéé laagvatte lank nadat ek alreeds die bal uitgegee het.

Ek en Johnny het twee ervarings beleef wat iets van die tyd van apartheid illustreer. Ons is na Van Schaik se boekwinkel in Pretoria om ou vraestelle te gaan koop. Met ons terugkeer moes ons eers agter 'n draadheining op die stasie wag terwyl die wit mense opklim. Eers daarna het die kondukteur 'n teken gegee dat die draadheining oopgegooi kon word. Ons moes toe ouer mense vinnig help om in te klim voordat die ongeduldige kondukteur sy fluitjie geblaas en die trein beweeg het. Die tweede ervaring was die aand voor ons matriekuitslae uitgekom het. Ons was baie opgewonde en het laataand dorp toe gestap om die koerant met die uitslae by die CNA-tak in Eloffstraat in te wag. Johnny het nog 'n ekstra pakkie sigarette saamgeneem om die tyd te verwyl. Oorkant die Boksburgmeer, reg voor die Tronk-vir-Vroue se hek het die polisie ons voorgekeer. "Hoekom is julle ná tien in die aand in die dorp?" Ons het hard probeer om te verduidelik dat ons die matriekuitslae wil gaan inwag. Alles verniet! Toe gooi hulle ons in die vangwa. Ons was seker dat ons agter tralies gaan slaap, maar toe ry die polisiewa wild met ons rond vir 'n lang tyd, twee wiele om elke draai, jaag oor 'n stuk oop veld en gaan gooi ons uiteindelik by Makanondo af.

Makanondo is die stuk oop veld tussen Germiston en Reigerpark. Ramaphosaville is nou deel daarvan. Die Bloudam lê ook daar. Wanneer 'n mens van Reigerpark oor Elsburgweg in 'n westelike rigting oor daai oop stuk veld stap, kry jy 'n spoorlyn. Anderkant die spoorlyn was die Germistonlokasie, Dukathole. Aan die suidekant was die Indiër-gemeenskap met sy winkels en die Orient-bioskoop. Teen die middel van die 1960's het bruin mense hoofsaaklik in die res van die gebied gewoon. Die meeste swart inwoners is toe al na Natalspruit verskuif. My verbintenis met Germiston het in die laat 1960's begin toe ek skoolvriende daar besoek het, maar veral toe ek in die vroeë 1970's by Liz, Elisabeth Fisher, gaan vlerksleep het.

Bekende bakens in Dukathole was die middelbare skool en Turton Hall wat as die gemeenskapsaal gedien het. Op die hoek van Neënde en Tiende Straat was die gemeenskaplike wasbalies waar die vroue gaan wasgoed was het, meestal op 'n Maandag. Die taxistaanplek was ook daar geleë.

Soms het ek die taxi's in Dukathole verpas, want hulle kon net tot sesuur namiddag diens lewer, dan moes ek terug Reigerpark toe stap. Met tye was ek lekker geswael en moes dan in die donkerte op 'n massiewe ronde pyp loop, wat vandag nog oor die damgebied strek. Wonder bo wonder is ek nog hier om die storie te vertel!

Die Bloudam was 'n gevaarlike plek. Oom George Jacobs, oorspronklik van Germiston, was onderwyser by Goede Hoop Laerskool tot en met

sy uittrede. Hy was al as *Mister Transvaal* gekroon in *body building* vir anderkleuriges in die apartheidstyd. Hy het Reigerpark toe verhuis en skuins oorkant ons gewoon. Hy het elke Vrydagaand vir ons met sy Bell & Howell-projektor *movies* in sy voorhuis gewys. Destyds as 'n jong man is sy stories oor die Bloudam in my brein ingeëts. Boksburg se brandweerdiens het soms van oom George se vaardigheid gebruik gemaak om die lyke van mense, meestal kinders van Germistonlokasie wat in die Bloudam verdrink het, uit te duik. Die dam was baie diep met troebel water en vol riete.

Die Seunsbrigade van Reigerpark, 1st Boksburg Company, het gereeld die Germiston Brigade van kaptein Dougie Kettledas besoek. Dit was van die interaksie tussen die gemeenskappe van Reigerpark en Germiston. Sokkerwedstryde is nie agterweë gelaat nie. Die Reigerparkers het ook vriende gemaak met leerlinge van Germiston se middelbare skool wat standerd 9 en 10 by Oosrand Hoërskool kom voltooi het.

Na matriek het ek gaan werk. Ek wou in die regte studeer, maar daar was nie geld nie. Van my vriende is na matriek na Bush, die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Ek het in 1973 by hulle aangesluit. Ek en Roderick het eers in Elsiesrivier loseer, daarna in Surrey Estate. Vir my was dit 'n moeilike jaar op die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland. Latyn was 'n vereiste vir BA-regte en ek moes vir Latyn Spesiaal registreer. Dit het maar broekskeur gegaan en teen die einde van die jaar het ek opgeskop.

Terug in Reigerpark het ek weer met Father Stan Brennan van die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk kennisgemaak. Ek, Ambrose en Ivan Joubert was alreeds by Father Stan se projekte betrokke in 1967 toe Father 'n kung fu fundi van die Franse Legioen gekry het om selfverdigingsklasse in die gemeenskap aan te bied. Later het die instrukteur voorgestel dat ek en nog twee vrinne balletklasse by sy vrou moet neem sodat ons liggame meer soepel kon word. Ek het dit geniet, glo my. Interessant genoeg het die gereg later die instrukteur verbied om hierdie tipe verdedigingsklasse aan te bied.

Daar was 'n baie goeie verstandhouding tussen my en Father Stan. Hy het vir my aangestel as voorsitter van die Young Christian Workers, die jeugorganisasie van sy kerk en in 1996 was ek deel van die eerste legendariese Debutant Ball, die toppunt van onthaal in Reigerpark. Tafeltennis was 'n gewilde tydverdryf onder die jeug. Ek nader toe vir Father Stan om te help met die stigting van 'n tafeltennisklub. Ons het by die Tafeltennisliga van Johannesburg aangesluit. My betrokkenheid oor die jare hier was kosbaar.

Ek het in 1974 in die Rooms-Katolieke kerksaal met Adam Small, die digter, kennisgemaak. Hy het die gemeenskap kom toespreek oor die onderwyserstekort en gevra dat senior onderwysers in die diens moet aanbly omdat hul ervaring so waardevol was. Toe hy klaar is, staan ek op en sê dat hy óór die koppe van die meeste mense gepraat het. Sommige van die onderwysers was taamlik ontsteld oor my optrede. Small het toe sy toespraak herhaal sodat álmal sy Afrikaans kon verstaan. Hierna het hy na my toe gestap en vir my 'n koppie tee aangebied. Daai spesifieke dag het my so beïndruk dat toe ek my dramagroep stig, het ek dit met trots K.A.T. gedoop: "Kopdoekie Afrikaans en Teater" omdat die oorgrote deel van die gehoor daardie middag uit ons omgee-mammies met kopdoekies bestaan het.

Toe ek in 1975 by Pierre Appleton in Cleveland begin werk het, het ek met 'n trapfiets werk toe gery. Later het ek 'n 1969 Triumph Bonneville 650 motorfiets gekoop. Daai motorfiets het nuwe vryheid gebring. Saans kon ek in die boheemse, kleurblind Hillbrow gaan kuier sonder om oor my skouer te kyk. Toe ek met Liz in 1977 trou, het ek die Triumph verkoop en 'n kar gekoop. In 1984 het ek 'n motorfiets by prof. Izak Broere, destyds 'n wiskundedosent aan die Randse Afrikaanse

Universiteit en later aan die Universiteit van Pretoria, gekoop. Ek ry daai fiets vandag nog, en almal herken my registrasie, Smaail GP! Ek het sowat 'n dekade later na die aankoop van die Beemer weer met prof. Broere kontak gemaak en ons het groot vriende geword. Hy is in 2020 aan Covid-19 verwante komplikasies oorlede. Hy was 'n genie met 'n sin vir humor.

In 1980 het ek en Ambrose aanlegtoetse by Wits se National Institute for Personnel Research gaan doen. So baie mense sterf sonder dat hulle hul talent ontdek en uitgeleef het. Ek wou nie van daardie mense wees nie. Toe ek my uitslae lees en sien dat ek aanleg in die skeppende kunste en literêre wêreld het en 'n persoonlikheid wat daarby pas, het ek 'n eureka-oomblik beleef: Ek is 'n kunstenaar! Toe maak my liefde vir eisteddfods op laerskool en my passie vir die kunste eensklaps sin. Ek het onthou dat ek vroeg reeds die mag van die pen gebruik het om sin uit die lewe te maak. My heel eerste komedie, *Die olielig brand,* het in 1968 die lig gesien. As die Markteater tóé geweet het dat ek vir groot dinge bestem was, sou hulle my gewis nie weggewys het omdat ek bruin was en "glimlag" as *smaail* geskryf het nie! Gelukkig het Nieto, Andrew le Roux, die eerste ambassadeur vanuit Reigerpark, hierdie komedie toe later op die planke gebring.

Wat onthou ek van die 1981-onluste in Reigerpark? Ek onthou dat die vingers na die Gangadins gewys het as een van die vonkies in die kruitvat, seker omdat hulle in beheer was van gedeeltes van die grond wat vir behuising bedoel was, maar waarop hul beeste toe gewei het. Hierdie onaangename voorval bly 'n pandoraboks. In Reigerpark was grond vir uitbreiding nog altyd 'n tameletjie. Ek onthou hoe die mense vir dr. EM Ebrahim en Mamma Ellen gehelp het om hul besighede te ontruim voordat ander lede van die gemeenskap van die winkels afgebrand het. Dit was 'n baie hartseerdag in Reigerpark.

Op 'n dag het dr. Kamala Patel my genader om kort dramas vir die Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSSEHV) te skryf wat die vyf pilare van waardes – *love, peace, truth, right conduct, non-violence* – uitbeeld. Later is dit in ander Afrikatale vertaal en elders in Afrika opgevoer. In 1984 het die Corsair-dramagroep Archibald MacLeisch se drama *JB* opgevoer. Ek was medeverantwoordelik vir beligting en klank, asook vir befondsing en administrasie, met ander woorde geen akteursrol nie. William Abdul was die regisseur. Hy was landwyd bekend as Uncle Bill van *Pumpkin Patch*, die reeks vir die jongspan wat van 1988 tot 1991 op televisie was. Doolie, so het ons hom genoem, was vir my 'n mentor. Ek het baie oor die uitvoerende kunste van hom geleer en hy het later landwyd saam met K.A.T. na kunstefeeste toe gereis.

In 1985 het ek 'n lid van die nuutgestigte Oosrand Alumnivereniging geword. Ek was aktief betrokke daarby. Hulle het talle suksesse behaal soos die Voorskoolsentrum in samewerking met ant Lilly Plaatjies en die voedingskema by die laerskole. Ek was as hoof van die Educational Committee betrokke by die Junior Achievement programme en by die kognitiewe ontwikkelingsprogram. Dit was hoogs suksesvol. Ek het ook 'n Career Guidance week geloods en was vir sewe jaar in beheer daarvan. Hierdie loopbaanweek was uiters gewild onder sowel die leerders as onderwysers. Leerders van so ver as Nigel is met busse aangery. Dit was vir my 'n hoogtepunt van my betrokkenheid by die Alumnivereniging. Ek was ook betrokke by die beursfonds waarby baie studente van Reigerpark baat gevind het.

Maar daar was ook teleurstellings. Ek wou 'n gemeenskapsradiostasie begin en het manalleen al die voorbereidingswerk gedoen. By Father Stan het ek 'n kamer gekry vir die radiostasie, en Radio Miami in die VSA sou die meeste van die toerusting vir my gee. Die eienaar van Radio 702 was bereid om te help met opleiding en mentorskap. Ek was die eerste persoon in die nuwe Suid-Afrika wat op 31 Maart 1995 'n gemeenskapsradiolisensie bekom

het. My radiostasie se naam was Rainbow People Community Radio, Ref 0041/COM/R/94/T. Maar die bestuur van die Alumnivereniging was onwillig om as beheerliggaam vir die radiostasie te dien. Dit was vir my 'n bitter pil en seker een van die grootste teleurstellings van my lewe, want ons Reigerparkse gemeenskap sou die meeste daarby baat vind. Onderwysers sou hul vakke oor die radio bespreek en elke kerk en sy koor 'n Sondagdiens lewer, ens. ens. In 1996 toe bedank ek uit die vereniging. Ek het later 'n Christelike gemeenskapsradio in Roodepoort toestemming gegee om die woord *rainbow* in hul naam te gebruik en die lisensie aan die Independent Broadcasting Authority teruggegee. Ek het later wel by radio betrokke geraak soos in onderhoude op RSG met dr. Frits Kok, hoof van die ATKV rakende die taal Afrikaans. In 1997 het Elize Parker my uitgenooi om betrokke te raak by Punt Geselsradio, waar ek oor gemeenskapskwessies gesels en stories vertel het.

Vanaf 1996 het ek deeltyds saans, oor naweke en gedurende vakansies by teater en verskillende televisieprojekte betrokke geraak. Vir meer as 20 jaar was dit my soort lewe: soggens werk toe en na werk teater toe en op die verhoog en teen middernag bed toe totdat ek uit my werk bedank en voltyds tot die kunste toegetree het. Dave Brown, die hoofingenieur by my werk, het my geadviseer om eers my huis af te betaal voordat ek bedank. Gedurende die onluste van die neëntigerjare was ek 'n student by Damelin Management School in Rosebank en moes na werk eers na die nuus op die draadloos luister om te sien of die hoofweg oop en veilig is. Na klas moes ek nog my klasmaat Pindi Matemba Hobo laatnag in Hillbrow gaan aflaai. Ek het my Professional Advertising Diploma in 1994 ontvang. Daarna het ek my kursus in drama by die National School of the Arts in Johannesburg onder leiding van Yvette Hardie voltooi. Ek het toe die Grahamstad Nasionale Kunstefees 'n paar maal bygewoon waar ek onder meer vir Peter Braaf en die Cape Flats Players ontmoet het. Met Peter se aanmoediging het ek met my eie produksie, *Gatiepie sien sy gat*, in 1996 in Grahamstown gedebuteer. Dit het niks met vloekery te doen nie! Op die plakkaat staan 'n man met 'n graaf voor 'n hoop sand en 'n oop graf. Die jaar daarna het ek deelgeneem aan RSG se radiodramakompetisie. Ek was een van tien finaliste wat gekies is om aan 'n radiodrama-werkswinkel deel te neem, aangebied deur die groot gees van radiodramas, Robert Young. Ek het ontdek dat ek 'n flair het vir die skryf van radiodramas en nogal met Gatiepie in die hoofrol my eerste radiodrama, *Eers lieg, dan bieg* geskryf.

Ná my debuut in Grahamstad is my komedie *Oz Pêl Gatiepie gaan visvang* na die Staatsteater in Pretoria. Die uitnodiging om daar te speel het onder meer opleiding vir my destydse klankingenieur, Danielle Magerman, ingesluit. My ervaring by die Staatsteater was onbeskryflik, veral omdat ek vir Marius Weyers ontmoet het. Met die verkiesing in 2004 volg *Erections 2004 – vote vir Gatiepie.* Dié keer was die illustrasie op die plakkaat 'n sirkustent! Toe ek uitgenooi word na die Chainouqua Kunstefees in Worcester, verwerk ek dit as *Gatiepie word president*.

In 2005 vat ek en Leonard Petersen my tweemanstuk *Gatiepie sien vrou-spoke* Namibië toe. Ek's baie trots op die resensie wat K.A.T. daar gekry het. Hierdie produksie is met enkele verwerkings en aanpassings ook by die Kunstekaap-teater (Artscape) in Kaapstad opgevoer. Toe ek hoor dat die dramagroep van die Pionierskool in Worcester, dis die skool vir blindes, die opvoering wou bywoon, het ek eers gedink dis 'n grap, maar toe hoor ek dat die hele skool wou kom! Daar en dan besluit ek dat hulle die opvoering verniet kan bywoon en toe skenk ons die aand se opbrengs aan die skool. Die laaste aand by die Artscape was 'n reusesukses. 'n Nuwe vriendskap tussen die mense van die Pionierskool en ons is daardie aand gebore. Ons, ek en Leonard, is na Worcester genooi om die leerders op hul eie verhoog in aksie te sien. Toe vra hulle my om 'n kort drama vir hulle te skryf. Na vele navorsing en onderhoude en met Goddelike inspirasie kon ek toe vier jaar later *Steek aan die kers* aan hulle oorhandig.

STANDARD BANK NASIONALE KUNSTEFEES
n Projek van die Grahamstown Foundation
"Smaail, ek sê...jy'-ja...juis - nevermind daai plooie, smeer kriem aan en jy mêrim met jou haasbek; jy maak dat ek ôk sommer smaail. "
Gatiepie sien sy Gat...
RIP
Hier rus Gat se
met n smaail,
ek sê - jou Brá'
ou-Danny
Tiema
Skinny
... ses voet diep
WAAR?
. . . met n kussingsloop-vol
glimlaggies en drukkies bring
Kevin Ehrenreich vir Gatiepie
en sy vrinne; teater toe
Kom en ontmoet hulle, hulle is
regtig baie naais mense - en
bring sommer jou smaail ôk
saam, ek sê.
By die 1820 SETLAARS NATIONALE MONUMENT GEBOU: B-2 Arena
DINS 29/6 21-00hrs
DON 1/7 17-00
SAT 3/7 21-00
MAAN 5/7 18-00
WOENS 7/7 10-00
VRY 9/7 18-00
As ou Gatiepie jou nie kan laat lag nie, wie kan ?
NET ONBEKENDE BEKENDES SOOS
Clarissa Rademeyer - Shaz - & Leonard Petersen, kan jou laat lag.
Geborg deur: - DIE REIGERPARK-TRUST

Dit alles was nie sonder finansiële uitdagings nie. Vir twee dekades het ek my dramageselskap K.A.T. se aktiwiteite uit my eie sak befonds. In 2005 met *Gatiepie sien vrou-spoke* het een corex-poster R15.50 gekos; om een poster op 'n lamppaal te hang het my R11.58 uit die sak gejaag; 'n eenmalige advertensie in *Beeld* (5cm X 10cm) was R855.00. Voeg daarby drie etes per dag vir die akteurs! By kunstefeeste moet verblyf, onkoste en vervoer nog bygetel word. Nou en dan het goeie kaartjieverkope darem die druk verlig. Ek het geen sent van die National Arts Council ontvang nie, eerder die opmerking: "Wat wil jy met Afrikaans gaan maak?" *Gatiepie kry 'n baby* was die geboorte van 'n nuwe fase toe ek vir die eerste keer geborg is, 'n hele R10 000 van die Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging (ATKV). Die KKNK het my een keer geld vir verblyf en vervoer gegee. Die organiseerders van die Kuierfees op Upington het begrip vir my sa(a)k gehad en nie net my vliegtuigkaartjie en verblyf betaal nie, maar my ook geldelik vergoed!

Ek het ook 'n draai by die WOW-fees in Stellenbosch gemaak. Dit lê my na aan die hart om 'n leeskultuur onder jong leerders te kweek. Ek het verskillende laerskole besoek en leerders aangemoedig om by te dra tot my grapboek en sodoende 'n trots te kweek asook 'n leeskultuur aan te moedig. *Gatiepie se groot grapboek* is deur LAPA Uitgewers gepubliseer. Van die materiaal het ook in die *Brailorama* tydskrif vir blindes verskyn.

Na 2005 was ek ook 'n gereelde stem op *Voice of the Cape*, 'n Moslemradiostasie. Aanvanklik het ek oor Gatiepie en teatersake gesels, maar later uitgebrei na aspekte oor leeskultuur en onderwerpe rakende die jeug.

Toe Taliep Petersen so tragies in 2006 dood is, het Haydee Morgan-Hollander, die vryskutjoernalis, vir my om 'n huldeblyk gevra. Ek het toe die gedig "Die weerlig het gesla't" neergegepen wat op *LitNet* en in ander tydskrifte en koerante verskyn het.[2] Ek het vir 'n jaar vir die Sondagkoerant *Rapport* geskryf, meestal oor politiek en sport. Ek het Rosa Keet ontmoet, wat my bygestaan, afgerig en my skryfkuns help afrond het. Sy het my as skrywer by die SAUK geregistreer. Ek het ook vir 'n jaar 'n kursus by AFDA (Africa Film

Drama Art) bygewoon waar ek geleer was hoe om blockbusters vir die filmbedryf te skrywe. Dit was alles te danke aan Helen Kuun van Ster-Kinekor aan wie ek 'n *movie* in gewone skryfstyl voorgelê het. Sy het my toe aan die hand geneem en aan Clarence Hamilton, hoof van NFVF (National Film and Video Foundation), voorgestel en dis hoe ek by AFDA beland het. Die res is geskiedenis. Ek het twee Gatiepie-blockbusters geskryf en met Margaret Goldsmid en Hanneke Schutte as draaiboekredakteurs gewerk, 'n ervaring wat ek vir niks ter wêreld sal verruil nie. Die blockbusters moet wel nog geskiet word.

Dan is daar ook my TV-werk. Ek het baie sukses gehad met *Agter die mynhoop*. Ons het 13 episodes op kykNET uitgesaai oor die leefwyse van mense in Reigerpark. Dit was die eerste dokumentêre reeks oor 'n bruin woonbuurt in Gauteng. Daar is soveel negatiewe dinge oor die bruin mense in omloop, en ek wou die positiewe dinge uitlig waaroor min gepraat word. Die reeks het sy ontstaan gehad by my boek *Maar net mense*, wat onder andere oor die soet en suur van Reigerpark handel toe daar nog nie so baie dwelms was nie. Maar ek kon nie die boek gepubliseer kry nie, en toe volg die televisiereeks.

Ek dink daar is suur as 'n mens aan die een kant kyk, dan aan die ander kant is daar die klomp kerke. Ek wonder of God in al die kerke is? Eerw. Desmond van der Water het dié ding gesê, nadat hy na 'n lang verblyf in Engeland teruggekeer het, en hier kom preek het. Ek neig om saam met hom te stem. Daar is so baie ongeskoolde pastoortjies. Hulle skep 'n slegte beeld van ander gesalfdes wat die Woord verkondig en van Christene oor die geheel. Hulle maak van die Christendom 'n bespotting. Tydens die hoogtepunt van die Covid-pandemie het ek baie troosdienste bygewoon, en wat 'n ervaring! 'n Mens moet net luister na die uitlatings van sommige pastore. Van hulle het na my mening 'n bespotting van die Woord gemaak. Daar word nie gepreek nie; dis 'n geskree, 'n herhaling, en alles word oordonder met klipharde musiek. Dit word 'n sirkus en dan wonder ons nog hoekom ons gemeenskap so verrot. Die tendens hier in Reigerpark is dat wanneer 'n vrou haar werk verloor, sy 'n kleuterskool of dagsorgonderneming begin. Hoe word daai arme kinders vir 'n skoolloopbaan voorberei? Wanneer 'n man sy werk verloor, begin hy 'n kerkie. Dis die rede vir die baie kerke, maar alles lei net tot afsplintering en faksies. Ons kinders gaan nie eers meer skool nie. Gesins- en gemeenskapswaardes is onder beleg.

Die soet van Reigerpark is vir my die samehorigheidsgevoel onder ons mense. Reigerparkers help graag waar moontlik. In daai opsig is die kerke ook ter sprake. In tye van krisis is hulle bereid om te help en byvoorbeeld kospakkies uit te deel. Dink aan die goeie werk wat Father Stan gedoen het en die pogings van die Fraternal. Daai predikante van verskeie kerke het hande gevat om die probleme in die gemeenskap gesamentlik aan te pak. Dis die soort stories wat ek in *Agter die mynhoop* wou vertel, en dit het Karen Meiring en Marida Swanepoel van kykNET oortuig. Nie alles het glad met die skiet van die reeks verloop nie. Laat ek maar net sê dat daar een 'politikus' was wat met een toneel vir ons probleme gegee het en dit wou ontwrig.

Toe die eerste episode uitgesaai is, het Jo-Ann Floris van *Beeld* met my 'n onderhoud gevoer.[3] Al is dit Reigerpark se storie, verteenwoordig dit enige ander bruin gemeenskap in die land. Deur die lens van die televisiekamera word die sand figuurlik kruiwa vir kruiwa weggery om die méns agter die mynhoop te ontbloot. Sy het ook spesiale melding gemaak van my liefde vir Afrikaans. Ek het vertel van die anties van Reigerpark wat soos die FBI, CNN en die internet is, so vinnig versprei hulle 'n storie. Dis nou nie kwaad of venynig bedoel nie. Dis soos dit is. Lientjie se haarkappersalon, die kerk en die langarmdanse, dis die plekke waar 'n storie loop en vertel word. Ek sê dit met piëteit. Ek het respek vir die rol wat geloof in die gemeenskap speel. Hier is meer as 100 kerke in Reigerpark, en ek dink veral a-politieke leiers kan ons gemeenskap vorentoe vat.

Met die tweede episode het *Rapport* ook met my kom gesels.[4] Hanlie Retief skryf van die "gawe maer man met sy grys baardjie en sy leerbaadjie met die oopbek-tier agterop". Ek het toe nog voltyds as klerk gewerk, en deeltyds as 'n dramaturg. *Gatiepie sien sy gat* was toe al by 'n paar kunstefeeste opgevoer. Sy het ook geskryf van my passie vir Afrikaans; die suur en die soet wat ek in die reeks uitbeeld; die verkeerde dinge soos die bendes en die hoë werkloosheidsyfer. Maar ook nie Reigerpark se unieke dinge agterweë laat bly nie. Dinge soos die omgee vir mekaar waarvan die 'koppie-suiker-oor-die-fence' maar een voorbeeld is; die humor, met 'n gelag wat inherent deel van die gemeenskap is, en die gevatte, raak benamings vir plekke soos Muskietvallei, Opmekaar, Hier en Daar, Fast Move, Excuse me (please), Little Germiston en Popcorn Valley. Dan is daar die afkondiging Sondae in al die kerke van die siekes in die spesifieke gemeente en so word die lys van krankes in die gemeenskap versprei. Dink aan die langarmdanse oor naweke met *live bands*, baie hiervan fondsinsamelings vir skole, of vir die sentrum waar oumense handwerk doen. Daar is die gebruik van troosdienste wanneer iemand afsterf; niemand gaan met leë hande nie, en 'n koppie tee met iets soets daarby is ons mense se gebruik.

Dis ook die probleme wat die gemeenskap saamgesnoer het. Dis nie te betwyfel nie: alles is nie verlore nie. In die *Rapport*-artikel word ek so aangehaal:

> Oral op die Goudrif word daar gemyn. Bo- en ondergronds word die mens liggaamlik en geestelik geondermyn. Aan die agterkant van hierdie monsteragtige mynhope met hul giftige slykdamme woon daar mense: 'n klompie hêppie mense wat laaik om te partie en met 'n permanent smaail op'ie daail, maar wat nooit die priorities van sy gemeenskap, sy neibir, sy bra, uit die oog verloor nie.

Ek onthou dat ek en die joernalis, Hanlie Retief, deur die buurt gestap het om die "vibe op te tel". Toe kom ons ant Violet met die stout oë tee; 94 jaar oud en toe wil sy die "makariena" dans, terwyl ek haar elmboog vashou. Die joernalis kon nie die geraas van vliegtuie oor Reigerpark mis nie, want die OR Tambo-lughawe is net 'n klipgooi ver, en ons mense leef onder die lawaai van die vliegtuie en die mynhoopstof. Die mense het aangepas en dis hierdie vermoë wat my hoop vir die gemeenskap gee. Toe Hanlie vra hoekom die mense van Reigerpark só misgekyk is, het ek geantwoord dat die bruin mense die toekoms is, ons is die "sonkinders van Afrika".

Ek sou 'n opvolgreeks vir *Agter die mynhoop* gedoen het, maar toe verhuis Rencia Froneman, die vervaardiger vir Gumba-Guumba Films, na Holland. Toe val die idee plat. Dieselfde jaar het ek *Krismis in Reigerpark* vir kykNET geskryf en aangebied. Dit is daarna gereeld gedurende die Kerstyd uitgesaai. Ek het hierna ook 'n paar ander programme vir kykNET gedoen. Een daarvan was *Hospitaal op horings.* Dis eers as 'n radiodrama geskryf , maar toe het ek dit saam met Henriëtta Gryffenberg verwerk na 'n televisiedrama. Só het ek nog 'n genre aangeleer. Ek het ook 'n paar rolle in die reeks *Ons Stories* op kykNET & kie vertolk, onder meer dié van die dronk diaken in *Bely en laat staan,* die boemelaar in *Skrikkeljaar* en die blinde man in *Amok.* My eerste filmrol was in *Karate Kallie* in 2009. In dieselfde jaar het ek ook in die steelfilm *Rainbow Skellums* gespeel en selfs 'n paar van die *gags*, die grappige tonele, geskryf. Ek het ook *gags* vir Leon Schuster se *Your country needs you* en *Schuks! Pay back the money* geskryf.

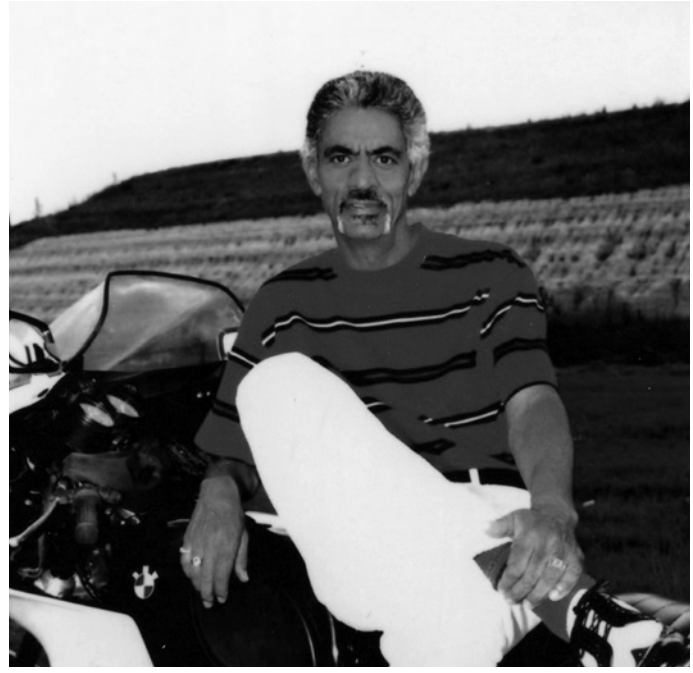
Toe doen ek 'n loodsprogram vir e.tv vir hulle reeks *Kasie, my Kasie,* soortgelyk aan *Agter die mynhoop*, waarin ek die situasie in Reigerpark uitbeeld. Vir kykNET het ek later op versoek ook 'n program gedoen *Hoe om 'n steelkamera movie te maak.* Ek was die skrywer, aanbieder en hoofkarakter, en André Scholtz die regisseur.

Ek het in my lewe 'n paar bekende mense ontmoet soos Adam Small. Prof. Jakes Gerwel het vir my 'n nota geskryf "mag jou skrywe gedy" en ek het ook in 1991 as seremoniemeester opgetree by 'n UWK-reünie in die Toyota-ouditorium waar hy die gasspreker was. Ek is baie trots hierop, veral omdat ek nie my studie aan UWK voltooi het nie. Prof. Gerwel het ook my boodskappe van onderskraging en gebede aan dr. Allan Boesak oorgedra toe laasgenoemde in die tronk was. Ek het dr. Boesak tydens die *Save Boksburg campaign* ontmoet. Ek het selfs met Nelson Mandela hand geskud en 'n paar woorde met hom gewissel. Met Chris Hani het ek oor die Engelse digkuns gesels en vir Breyten Breytenbach tydens 'n Taalberaad in 1994 ontmoet.

Ek het baie lof vir Paul Boekkooi, 'n internasionale resensent wat positiewe resensies van my verhoogstukke geskryf het. Ek het ook baie te danke aan Helen Kuun van Ster-Kinekor, Clarence Hamilton van die NFVF, en die draaiboekredakteurs Margaret Goldsmid en Hanneke Schutte. Wat befondsing betref, hoop ek dat die Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) en NFVF sal bykom wanneer ons weer aan films kan werk, nadat Covid-19 'n speek in die wiel in befondsing en ons beplanning gesteek het.

Covid-19 het my gedwing om met nuwe idees vorendag te kom. Die gehore was vir my 'n belangrike dryfkrag tydens die opvoer van my Gatiepie-komedies, maar ek wil nou graag iets vir die nuwe geslag nalaat. Ek het gedink aan animasie sodat Gatiepie in 'n nuwe formaat kan voortleef. Ek bestudeer nou animasie, sodat ek self die basiese sketse kan doen. Ek is 'n groot Walt Disney-aanhanger. In my garage is daar lewensgroot Disney-karakters teen die muur en my versameling Disney-prentverhale uit die 1960's en 1970's is vandag seker 'n hele paar rand werd.

Dankie aan al die mense wat in my vermoë geglo het en die geleenthede aangebied het sodat ek my drome kon kristalliseer; om maar 'n paar uit te sonder: Rosa Keet, Karen Meiring, Marida Swanepoel, Elize Parker, Jakes Gerwel en ook baie



dankie aan my ware vriende en natuurlik my liewe gesin.

Dankie ook aan al die akteurs en aktrises van K.A.T. wat in die ses Gatiepie-komedies gespeel en landswyd en in Namibië opgevoer is. 'n Groot dankie aan die talentvolle Leonard Petersen, asook K.A.T. se lewenslange klank- en beligtingsingenieur, my brá Lerato Maruping. Laastens, dankie aan die invloedryke kunstenaars en vrinne soos die Cape Flats Players met wie my paaie gekruis het.

Skoppensboer raak 'n realiteit, maar daar is nog dinge wat ek wil doen. Ek het 'n digbundel, *sloffies en skoenfieters*, wat al vir jare lê en stof optel en nou terug in die pyplyn is; ek droom ook om eendag 'n rol in *Raka* van NP van Wyk Louw te vertolk.

Na alles, en vir my hele lewe kan ek, Kevin van'ie 'Kasie van Gousblomstraat, Reigerpark aan my pa, Martin Ehrenreich, sê: U bly my held, want u was my pottebakker. En ten slotte: aan my Skepper alle eer.

Gebaseer op Kevin Ehrenreich se geskrewe insette en 'n gesprek met Cecil en Marilyn Morden op 17 November 2020.

27

Vanaf Dukathole: Raymond Geiler en Kenneth Whitecomb se trekke

Marilyn Morden

Alhoewel heelwat gesinne uit Germistonlokasie (Dukathole) na Stirtonville/Reigerpark in die 1960's verskuif is, het die meeste egter in Germiston aangebly omdat dit gou duidelik geword het dat daar tóé nie genoeg behuising in Stirtonville/Reigerpark was nie. Die meeste van die beskikbare huise in Stirtonville/Reigerpark is toegeken aan mense uit Actonville (Benoni) omdat die gebied 'n Indiërwoonbuurt verklaar is. Die plan was dat Germistonlokasie heeltemal gesloop moes word om plek vir nywerhede te maak. Die plan het nooit gerealiseer nie en die owerhede het geen keuse gehad as om die meeste bruin mense en Indiërs in Germistonlokasie te laat aanbly nie. In Actonville was daar ook nie voldoende behuising vir die Indiërs van Germiston wat soontoe moes trek nie.

Eers 'n dekade later, in die middel 1970's, is twee nuwe woonbuurte in Alberton, Edenpark en Palm Ridge, onderskeidelik vir die bruin en Indiër inwoners van Germistonlokasie ontwikkel. Hierdie twee gebiede is langs mekaar, maar geskei deur 'n stuk veld. 'n Paar jaar later is die woonbuurt Rabie Ridge, naby Tembisa in Kemptonpark, vir bruin mense ontwikkel, en van die mense van Germistonlokasie het soontoe verhuis. Geluksdal in Brakpan is ook as bruin woonbuurt ontwikkel, hoofsaaklik vir die mense uit Payneville, Springs, maar 'n aantal mense uit Germiston en Reigerpark het ook soontoe verhuis.

Kenny Whitecomb se ma, Clara Booysen, kom oorspronklik vanaf Graaff- Reinet in die Oos-Kaap en sy pa, Martin Whitecomb, vanaf Mowbray in Kaapstad. Sy pa was wees en het later saam met familie Rustenburg toe getrek. Daar het hy tot standerd 6 skoolgegaan, waarna hy moes gaan werk om met die huishoudelike uitgawes te help. Hy het later as 'n naaimasjientegnikus gekwalifiseer. Kenny se ma het uit Graaff-Reinet Elandsfontein toe getrek, waar sy gewerk het. Sy ouers het in Elandsfontein ontmoet en sy oudste broer is daar gebore. Die gedeelte van Elandsfontein waar hulle gewoon het, is as industriële gebied verklaar en hulle moes vort. Aan die begin van 1940 het hulle Germiston toe verhuis.

Jacob Steele, Johnny Thomas, Aaron Williams, Les Smith, Onbekend, Abraham Ziggs, Ruth Fraser en Kenneth Whitecomb (Whitecomb-versameling).

Sy ouers het eers in Vierde Straat, in die Indiër-gedeelte van die lokasie, en toe in Tweede Straat, Ghost Town, gewoon. Ghost Town was 'n klein gebied naby 'n munisipale vullishoop en nie ver van 'n spruit geleë nie, met net twee strate. Hy en drie van sy sibbe is in Vierde Straat en die ander in Tweede Straat gebore. Hulle was sewe broers en vier susters. Die meeste van hulle is by die huis gebore, te verwagte met sy ouma wat 'n vroedvrou was. Slegs die jongste is in Germistonhospitaal gebore. Later het sy ouers na die hoek van Neënde Straat verhuis, in wat toe die boonste deel van die lokasie was. Hierdie gedeelte was aanvanklik die middelste deel van die lokasie wat eers oorwegend deur swart mense bewoon is voordat hulle na Natalspruit verskuif is. Dit was ook voordat Cape Stands, verder boontoe waar die meeste bruin mense aanvanklik gewoon het, in die 1950's gesloop is om vir nywerhede plek te maak. Oorkant hul huis in Neënde Straat was 'n gemeenskaplike wasarea waar mense, meestal vroue, kom wasgoed was het. Hierdie wasplek was tot rondom 1971 in gebruik. Dit was by hierdie wasarea waar die berugte bendelid uit Reigerpark, Big Fish, sy eie vriend Gabby vermoor en waar hy, Big Fish, 'n stuk van sy neus verloor het. Daar naby was ook 'n taxistaanplek.

Raymond Geiler het in Sesde Straat grootgeword. Sy pa, Ebrahim Khan, later pastoor Khan in die AGS Kerk, is oorsponklik vanaf Indië. Sy ma, Mirriam, was 'n weduwee toe sy sy pa ontmoet het. Uit hierdie verhouding is ook 'n dogter gebore. Sy ouers het egter nooit getrou nie. Later het Ebrahim tot bekering gekom en 'n ander dame, ant Pienkie, ontmoet met wie hy toe getrou het. Sy pa het hulle egter gereeld besoek, altyd saam met een van die kerkbroers, en finansieel tot sy kinders se onderhoud bygedra.

Die eerste AGS-kerkgebou was geleë tussen Tweede en Derde Straat in Cape Stands. Die laerskool in Cape Stands was naby die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk. Daar was oggend- en middagsessies by die skool. Raymond onthou toe hy in standerd twee was, het daar swaar hael geval. Toe die meeste van die huise in Cape Stands gesloop is, het die skool ook in die slag gebly. Die kinders is toe na 'n ander gebou verskuif, Germiston Middelbare Skool, wat slegs tot standerd 8 (graad 10) gegaan het.

Na standerd 8 moes die leerlinge na William Hills Hoërskool in Actonville toe gaan. Hulle het per trein vanaf Germistonstasie skool toe gereis.

Waar Cape Stands eens was, is daar nou fabrieke, wat strek tot in die omgewing van die huidige Enterprise-fabriek. Daar was ook slagpale. Later, toe die swart mense verskuif is na Natalspruit / Katlehong, het meer bruin mense na die middelgedeelte van die lokasie getrek. In die nabygeleë Stragenhostel het meesal *maBatlas* (trekarbeiders) gewoon; behalwe die mynwerkers was daar ander wat bedags die vullis verwyder het; die nagvuil is deur Zoeloes verwyder. Daar was 'n spoorwegstasie naby Cape Stands, Kutalostasie, op 'n syspoorlyn wat tot in die omgewing van Katlehong geloop het.

Onder in Dertiende Straat, naby die woning van die Wathens, was daar 'n crèche. Oom Teddy Wilkinson se ma, ant Dol, ant Martha Abrahams en ant Gerty Sauls het die kinders onderrig en opgepas, terwyl ant Margie Foster met kosmaak gehelp het. Oom Adam en oom Dirk het na die onderhoud van die geboue en werf omgesien. Later moes die crèche na die Turton Hall verskuif omdat die gebou in Dertiende Straat aan die Myburghs, 'n redelike groot familie, gegee is.

'n Kenmerk van Dukathole was die gemeenskaplike krane, een bo en een onder, in die onderskeie strate. Jy moes nogal jou tydsberekening ken as jy nie te lank in die tou vir water wou staan nie. Die dra van die wateremmers, -kanne of -dromme was taamlik ongemaklik. Smiddae na skool was dit die kinders se plig om met allerhande takies soos huis- of werfskoonmaak te help, water aan te dra, skooltake en huiswerk te voltooi, voordat hul met hul maats kon gaan speel. Daarna moes hulle seker maak dat hulle betyds is om die kolestoof aan die gang te kry sodat dit warm is wanneer hulle ma's terug van die werk is om die aandete voor te berei. Oom Duimpie Martin en oom Joemat het hout en kole verkoop. Aan die begin het hulle die gebied op perdekarre deurkruis, maar later trokke aangekoop. Oor naweke het hulle met groente en vrugte gesmous.

Voordat Raymond formeel skool toe moes gaan, het hy vir 'n paar maande saam met sy broer wat toe in standerd 6 was, skool "bygewoon". Hulle het hom 'n "saamloper" genoem. Vir 'n paar uur was hy in een van die Sub A-klasse en daarna het hy vir die res van die dag in sy broer se klas gaan sit. Die groot trekpleister was die gratis melk of jogurt, en soms kaas, wat die leerlinge daagliks ontvang het. Die melk was in 'n ronde 250 ml glasbottel. Die onderwysers was redelik vrygewig om hom in te sluit, veral omdat hy nie 'n ingeskrewe leerling was nie.

Kenny se eerste onderwyseres, me. Helen Arendse, was baie streng. Kenny is linkshandig, maar die onderwyseres wou niks verstaan nie. Hy moes teen wil en dank met sy regterhand leer skryf. Hy doen dit tot vandag toe, maar is andersins linkshandig. Me. Arendse en sy broer se meisie was vriende. Nog 'n onderwyseres, me. Heyns, was met sy ma bevriend. Hulle het die kerkdienste van dieselfde Lutherse gemeente bygewoon. Hy en sy sibbe het soms saam met sy ouers na die Westbury Coronation kerk gegaan, veral wanneer daar groot nagmaaldienste was. Ander onderwysers was mnre. Soemie Abrahams, Volkwyn, George Jacobs, Wathen, Tiefie Barnes, Hendricks, Anthony Morgan en Thomas (Tossie). Sy gunstelingonderwyser mnr. Hendricks was van Pretoria; Kenny moes soms vir hom middagete op die boekie by ant Polly gaan koop. Sy het klokslag nog 'n pakkie bygegee, wat hy eers later uitgevind het drank was.

Raymond onthou dat hulle soms middagskool moes bywoon, en onthou ook dieselfde laerskoolleerkragte asook die name van mnre. Mac-Alfred Hero en Barry Clarke van Bosmont, en mnr. George Pullen. Mnr. Hero was getroud met Rhoda, dogter van mnr. Andrew Solomons. Mnr. Pullen was 'n houtwerkonderwyser en ook sy klasonderwyser in st. 5.

Heelwat van die leerkragte het in Germiston gewoon, maar 'n paar het vanaf Johannesburg en

Pretoria gependel. Die skoolhoofde was mnre. Felix, Andrew Solomons en Arthur Hare. Later het mnr. Hare die hoofpos by Drommedaris Laerskool aanvaar. Hy was ook by die bestuur van die Transhavenskool in Durban, naby Wentworth, betrokke. Behoeftige kinders het vir een kwartaal die Transhavenskool bygewoon en dan sommer ook 'n lekker gratis vakansie by die see geniet. Soms is kinders gekies wat nie juis behoeftig was nie, of dan nie so behoeftig soos ander nie, 'n teken van voortrekkery.

Mnr. Solomons was baie aktief in die gemeenskap. Hy was eers onderwyser, later hoof, en het mense gehelp om hul identiteitsdokumente te kry. Hy het selfs van die Chinese in die gebied met hul Afrikaans gehelp. Oom Kenny Salie, oom Conference en mnr. De Sousa het ook mense bygestaan om hul identiteitsdokumente te kry. Oom Kenny was 'n senior amptenaar van die Callies sokkerklub. Mnr. De Sousa was 'n onderwyser en alhoewel hy later blind geword het, het hy nog altyd mense vanaf sy huis gehelp. Hy het naby die crèche gewoon.

In 1968 het Raymond standerd ses op Oosrand Hoërskool begin, maar moes dit die daaropvolgende jaar herhaal. Kenny het sy hoërskooljare op Oosrand Hoër in 1970 begin.

Sokker, netbal en tennis was van die sportkodes waaraan die jongmense van Germistonlokasie deelgeneem het. Mac Hero was 'n goeie sokkerspeler en het ook in tennis uitgeblink. 'n Uitstaande sokkerspeler was Albert Johanneson, oftewel Taaitjie, wat vir Callies gespeel het. Hy het later vir Leeds in Engeland gaan speel. Nog 'n sokkerspeler, Johnny Thomas, het 'n aanbod gekry om in Engeland te gaan speel, maar sy verloofde, Fatie Samuels, wat toe swanger was, het 'n stokkie voor sy plan gesteek. Ant Lena Rademeyer was 'n gemeenskapswerker van formaat. Sy was betrokke by netbal en het heelwat toernooie gereël. Sy het later vir die dames naaldwerk gegee, en was ook betrokke by die reël van skoonheidswedstryde

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Die Transvaalse Strandfonds (Transhaven Seaside Fund) speel 'n belangrike rol om behoeftige kinders op opvoedkundige toere na die Durban-omgewing te neem.

en konserte. Sally Peterson, oorspronklik van Kimberley, was betrokke by naskoolse aktiwiteite soos kultuur, karate en landloop *(road running)*, en het sodoende gehelp om die jeug van bende-aktiwiteite weg te hou. Op daardie stadium was daar drie aktiewe bendes in die lokasie, die GMG's, die Fast Elevens en die Vultures.

Kenny het sokker op senior vlak, vir Germiston City, tot in 1976 gespeel. Hulle het in die Federation League deelgeneem, wat nie die regeringsgesinde sportliggame ondersteun het nie. Hulle het so ver as Kimberley aan ligas deelgeneem. Sundowns was ook deel van die Federation League en mnr. WJ Filander wat later hoof van Oosrand Hoërskool sou word, was 'n amptenaar van hierdie klub. Later is die span verkoop en speel vandag nog in die Suid-Afrikaanse eerste liga. Ander sokkerspanne in die Federation League was Leicester City, Kimberley Leeds, Manchester en Chelsea van Bosmont. John Hartman wat middelvoor *(centre half)* gespeel het, was een van die bekende sokkerspelers van Germiston in die laat 1960's en vroeg 1970's.

Op 'n foto van Germiston City Football Club wat geneem is in die middel-1970's verskyn die volgende persone: Olive Govender, Paddy Kraft, Oliver Adams, Abdullah 'Boy' Sayed, Jamiel Davids, Moosa

Abe Peterson, Raymond Geiler, Steven Myburgh, Chris Linberg en Janie van Heerden (Geiler-versameling).

Salie, Rajgopal 'Baboo' Stevens, Dennis Myburgh, Haniff Cassim, Krish Moodley (kassier), Goolam Jassat (sekretaris), Soobry Arnachillam (president), Ismail Ravat (vise-president), George Dunn (kaptein), Satchu Govender (vise-president), William 'Pro' Danster, Ragea Kassim Isman (bestuurder), Godfrey Robertse, Ignatius Mbaco, Kenneth Whitecombe en die gelukbringer *(mascot),* Arnold Arnachillam. Andere wat verbonde was aan die klub op daardie stadium, maar nie op die foto was nie, het ingesluit: Subbiah Collakoppen (lewenslange vise-president), Krish Govender, Basil Fuller, Victor Minnie, Nithia Padiachy, Abdul Mohamed, Jimmy Naidoo en Stanley Padayachee.

Die meeste van die kulturele aktiwiteite soos opvoerings, rolprentvertonings en veral danse oor naweke het in die Turton Hall plaasgevind. Hierdie saal was 'n mooi gebou met houtvloere en 'n verhoog. Ongelukkig het 'n paar mense gedurende naweke hul lewens hier na die danse verloor.

In 1970 het mnr. M Vrey, 'n Hollander, die superintendent van Germistonlokasie geword. Hy was betrokke by baie gemeenskapsinisiatiewe en het die mense baie gehelp. Hy was ook sommer "burgemeester" en "hoof veiligheidsbeampte" van die gebied. Hy het 'n veiligheidseenheid, die Black Jacks, gestig om te probeer om die bendes in toom te hou. Hy het ook gereeld sportdae gereël. Die eerste Saterdag van November was Kinderdag, dan het hulle fees gevier en gehelp met fondsinsameling.

Op een so 'n dag het Raymond en sy vriend Abe Peterson 'n kollekteblikkie wat met lood verseël was, gekry om te help. Later die dag het almal by die Turton Hall bymekaar gekom om die dag af te sluit. Op pad daarheen "ontdek" die twee dat die blikkie geld alte swaar is en besluit toe om hulself te help. Gelukkig vir hulle was die rekordhouding van die aantal blikkies wat die oggend uitgedeel is nie te waffers nie en kon hulle wegkom met hul "slim" streek, ten koste van Kinderwelsyn en behoeftige kinders van die gebied.

Hoewel Raymond en Kenny nie self betrokke

was in die bedrywighede van die AGS in Germistonlokasie nie, was baie van die kerkbroers aan hulle bekend. Hulle verwys na oom Seunas Jacobs wat baie gerespekteer, maar terselfdertyd ook gevrees was. Ander persone wat betrokke was by die AGS Kerk in Germistonlokasie was broers John Selinder, Gordon, Boss, Johnny Thomas, Isak Allies, Martin Allies, oom Tas Jacobs, oom James Varrie en oom Abraham Morden. Uit die geledere van die susters onthou hulle susters Jacobs en Thomas. Die AGS Kerk het baie opelugdienste in die gebied gehou, maar ook so ver as Springs, Nigel en Standerton. Oom James Varrie het gesing en oom Seunas het kitaar gespeel. Hulle verwys na 'n insident waar oom Seunas een dag by 'n opelugdiens gepreek het toe 'n voorval by sy broer en skoonsuster, oom Toi en ant Susan, se huis nie ver daarvandaan nie onder sy aandag gebring is. Oom Seunas het gou sy broer gaan help deur 'n paar ouens op te foeter, toe teruggegaan en verder gepreek asof niks gebeur het nie! Hulle noem dat oom Seunas rof was en maklik kon baklei ten spyte van sy betrokkenheid by die kerk. Selfs toe oom Seunas in die kerkraad gedien het, was hy blykbaar baie moeilik. Praat van 'n ongeslypte diamant. Later, op Edenpark, het Raymond en Kenny aktief in die AGS betrokke geraak.

Die eerste AGS kerkgebou in Dukathole was 'n gebou van sink in Cape Stands. Toe Cape Stands gesloop is, is 'n nuwe kerkgebou op oom Dan Sauls se erf in Neënde Straat opgerig. Die tweede kerkgebou is opgerig met dieselfde materiaal waarmee die kerk in Cape Stands gebou is.

Op Edenpark het Johnny Thomas die leiding in die AGS Kerk geneem. Aan die begin het hulle in die groot dubbelmotorhuis van die Wilkinsons diens gehou. In Germistonlokasie het Ernest (Rox) Majorie toe die leiding in die kerk oorgeneem en Martin Allies het uit Reigerpark gekom om te help, veral met die jeugdienste. Die gemeentes van Germiston en Edenpark het van tyd tot tyd gesamentlike nagmaaldienste gehou totdat die meeste mense later uit Germiston verhuis het.

Die ironie is dat Dukathole vandag nog bestaan, alhoewel die gebied 'n totale metamorfose ondergaan het. 'n Groot gedeelte van die gebied (van wat oorgebly het) bestaan uit informele strukture alhoewel daar ook 'n aantal HOP-huise gebou is. Aan die ander kant van die spoorlyn is meer formele huise gebou en die gebied sal waarskynlik met verloop van tyd met Ramaphosaville aan die buitewyke van Reigerpark "saamsmelt".

Mnr. Davie Sampson van die Federale Party was in die laat 1960's en 1970's van die polities-aktiewe persone in die gebied. Aan die ander kant was daar mnr. Wallie Hoffman wat die Verteenwoordigende Kleurlingraad (VKR) as instelling verwerp en mense aangemoedig het om die verkiesings te boikot. Sy vrou was 'n onderwyseres. Hulle het later teruggetrek Kaap toe.

Dan was daar 'n Indiër slaghuiseienaar wat op 'n Saterdag heelwat wit klante gehad en openlik voorkeur aan hulle gegee het. Sy bruin en swart klante moes dan eenkant hul beurt afwag. Omdat hy goeie vleis verkoop het, het hulle dit maar gelate aanvaar en nooit oorweeg om hom te boikot nie.

Enkele van die ouers wat dit kon bekostig, het hul kinders Barberton of Ixopo toe gestuur om daar hul hoërskoolloopbaan te voltooi. Billy Herman van Dertiende Straat was een van dié gelukkiges. Sy pa, oom Nicolaas, het taxi's gehad en sy ma, antie Ray, was 'n verpleegster en die suster van me. Arendse.

Teen 1960 het die meeste swart families toe al na Natalspruit verhuis. Van die bruin families het reeds in 1961 uit Germistonlokasie begin trek Stirtonville toe. Die families wat heel bo in die lokasie gewoon het, rondom Vierde Straat, moes eerste trek. Aan die ander kant het 'n paar families egter vanuit Kemptonpark weer Germiston toe getrek. Kenny se neef Aubrey Whitecomb het in 1962 Stirtonville toe getrek; hy het in Asterstraat gaan woon. Sy pa wou egter nie Stirtonville/Reigerpark toe trek nie omdat die gebied volgens hom 'n bietjie rof was. Baie

Reiger Park demands resignation of CMC

MORE than 400 angry Reiger Park residents said no to the Coloured Management Committee, no to unjustified rent increases, no to the high electricity and water accounts, no to the deliberate housing shortage and no to untidy dumping lots at a public meeting recently.

The meeting, convened by the Tenants and Ratepayers Association of Reiger Park unanimously passed a vote of no confidence in the Coloured Management Committee and called for it to resign immediately or for the Boksburg Town Council to take steps to have it dissolved.

This is the fifth action committee or residents association to reject the Coloured Management Committee system within a short period.

The Coloured Management Committee in Reiger Park is chaired by the Transvaal leader of the Labour Party and president of the Coloured and Indian Management Association, Mr Jac Rabie.

Mrs Ellen Lambert, executive member of the Tenants and Ratepayers Association and of the Transvaal Anti-PC Committee, chaired the meeting. She condemned the sudden rent increases.

"How are pensioners going to pay R40-36 for rent when they only receive a R91 pension," she asked.

"If we want to build a future which our children and grandchildren could be proud of, then we must unite and form ourselves into a formidable force to be reckoned with", said another speaker, Mrs Vera du Plessis.

Criticising the high water and electricity accounts, she commented that "we must fight for what we believe to be our birthright". "Let us unite and raise our voices in unison," she called.

The meeting called on the Boksburg Town Council to make more stands available at Delmore. Presently houses are being built there by the United Building Society.

"We can't afford the rent increase", Mrs Ellen Lambert.

"Most people will never be able to raise R11 500 deposit and still pay R577 for installments at Delmore" said Mr R J Triegaardt, treasurer of the Tenants and Ratepayers Association.

Residents want to be able to buy and build their own houses at prices they can afford.

People at the meeting also complained that the Boksburg Town Council was not keeping the township clean, even though their service charges are frequently increased.

Verhoging in huur en protes in Reigerpark (*Speak*, Januarie 1984).

van die inwoners van Dukathole het nog daarop aangedring dat die gebied ontwikkel moet word, veral die gedeelte anderkant die spoorlyn, in die rigting van die Bloudam, maar die munisipaliteit wou nie gehoor gee nie. Daar is egter 'n woonbuurt anderkant die spoorlyn, in die rigting van Elsburg, genoem Tedstoneville, vir wit mense ontwikkel (meesal spoorwegwerkers) wat vanuit Georgetown, naby Germistonstasie, daarheen verhuis het. Van die mense wat in die barakke naby die Randse lughawe gewoon het, het ook daarheen verhuis.

Die meeste inwoners van Dukathole het vanaf die middel 1970's begin trek na Edenpark (die bruin families) en Palm Ridge (die Indiër families). Kenny het in 1977 getrou en huis opgesit in Dukathole. In 1979 was hy en sy jong gesin verplig om Edenpark toe te trek toe die munisipaliteit 'n sloot voor sy huis gegrawe het wat dit vir hulle moeilik gemaak het om in en uit sy erf te beweeg. 'n Brand in die Indiër-gedeelte van Germistonlokasie waarin agt mense gesterf het, het die trek na Palm Ridge "aangehelp". Raymond-hulle moes in 1979 onder dwang Edenpark toe trek. Hy kon nie by die werk afkry nie en sy gesin moes alleen die trek behartig. Hy kon eers na werk by hul nuwe huis gaan help.

Aan die begin was vervoer vanaf Edenpark 'n groot kopseer vir die nuwe inwoners, en vir baie bestaan hierdie probleem vandag nog. Edenpark is afgeleë en ver van baie inwoners se werkplekke. Nog later moes van die bittereinders van Dukathole Rabie Ridge toe trek. Van die positiewe faktore in Edenpark was die gerief van eie toilette in die huis en toegang tot elektriese krag. Ongelukkig was nie voldoende voorsiening gemaak vir die armstes van die armes nie, diegene wat nooit huur in Dukathole betaal het nie en nie die huur in Edenpark kon bekostig nie. Heelwat families is uit hul nuwe huise gesit, met meubels en al. Van hulle het teruggetrek Dukathole toe.

Mnr. Johnny Thomas het by die Arbeidersparty aangesluit en later Superintendent van Edenpark geword. Hy het baie mense gehelp om huise te kry, selfs dié wat voorheen hul huise verloor het. Mense het ook later vanaf Johannesburg hierheen verhuis.

Tydens die betogings in 1984-85 toe daar begin was met 'n veldtog van die nie-betaling van dienste het van die mense weer hul huise teruggekry. Na 1994 het die huurders in Edenpark hul titelaktes ontvang en trotse huiseienaars geword. Tans is die probleem dat die ouer geslag (en selfs van die nuwe geslag) intestaat, sonder 'n geskrewe testament,

sterf, wat lei tot groot twis onder die kinders.

Vandag is groot gedeeltes van Edenpark gemeng, veral nuwe uitbreidings soos Riemvasmaak waar bruin en swart in dieselfde buurt bly. Daar is wel politieke verskille, maar verdraagsaamheid heers. Met die xenofobiese aanvalle in Thokoza 'n paar jaar gelede het baie mense hier 'n veilige hawe kom soek.

In die meeste van die kerke in Edenpark is Afrikaans nog die hooftaal, alhoewel al hoe meer dienste in Engels gehou word. Volgens Raymond is mense huiwerig om in 'n ander taal te preek; 'n mens se ego is immers ter sprake. Dit is nie aldag maklik om die tye – present tense! past tense! – reg te kry nie. Vir Kenny is die "Brits" egter nie 'n probleem nie; sy vrou Pamela is immers van Durban dus is Engels een van hul huistale.

Daar is tans 'n tekort aan leiersfigure en rolmodelle om die kinders te motiveer. Bemoedigend is dat daar onlangs twee persone uit Edenpark as mediese dokters gekwalifiseer het, wat 'n groot inspirasie vir die jeug is. Dit is belangrik om die jeug aan te moedig om terug te ploeg in die gemeenskap.

9 Desember 2020

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Die formidabele egpaar Billings

MARILYN MORDEN EN CECIL H MORDEN

Voor die stigting van die lokasie in Benoni het die mense in die onmiddellike omgewing van die myne, op myngrond, gebly. Daar was myne en woonbuurte soos Modderfontein, Modderbee en Modder East. Die mynmaatskappye het gesorg vir verblyf aan hulle werkers. Slegs werknemers van die myn kon dus op myneiendom bly. Die myne het minimale lone betaal en dit aangevul met rantsoene. Modderfontein was die bruin woonbuurt van die Modderfonteinmyn. Dit het aan Cloverdene gegrens en is ongeveer waar Crystal Park vandag is. Families soos die Adolphs, Fortuins, Kocks, Pritchards en Trees het daar gewoon. Hulle ouers het aanvanklik almal op die myne gewerk. Talle mense wat in Reigerpark woon of gewoon het, het familielede wat op die myne gewerk en gebly het. Benoni was nie die enigste plek waar bruin mense op die myne gewerk het nie. Hulle het ook in Springs, Brakpan (State Mines) en Geduld gewerk. Bruin mense het 'n groot bydrae tot die uitbouing van die myne gelewer. Volgens mnr. Ronald Charles Billings (80) het die bruin mense verspreid in kolle oor die gebied gewoon en nie saam in een groot gebied nie deur die toedoen van die apartheidsregering.

Modderfontein het die eerste skool vir bruin mense in Transvaal gehad. Dit was nie 'n groot skool nie, maar een gebou waarin al die leerlinge geakkommodeer is. Die kerksaal van die Ebenezer Kerk is vir hierdie doel gebruik. Juf. Noelene Billings se ma, Dinah Botha (geb. Smith) , het daar skoolgegaan. Mnr. Joseph (Joey) Noble was die skoolhoof, met mnr. Clarence September een van sy personeellede. Mnr. Noble was lief vir kultuur en het gereeld konsert gehou. Sokker en konserte was die ontspanning van die dag. Daar was onder andere 'n blaasorkes; juf. Billings se ma het die eufonium geblaas en haar oom die trompet. Hulle het gereeld met die perdekar Alexandra township (Alex) toe gery om daar te gaan konsert hou. Hulle sou laatmiddag vertrek; mnr. Noble het dan seker gemaak dat almal veilig teruggebring en by hul wonings besorg word. Mnr. Billings onthou onder groot gelag hoedat sy oupa op 'n keer 'n bees Alex

Die Billings-gesin: Natasha, Ronald, Rosalind, Noelene en Charlene (Billings-versameling).

toe gejaag het! Dit was die tyd toe mense groot erwe in Alex besit het. Toe mnr. Noble Potchefstroom toe gaan, het mnr. Sayed hom as hoof opgevolg.

Na die myn het mnr. Billings se pa op die spoorweg gaan werk. Hulle moes noodgedwonge die myngebied verlaat en dorp toe, Syrian Town toe, verhuis. Nog voordat hulle hulle daar gevestig het, het die mense 'n paar erwe in die lokasie in Benoni bekom wat Cape Stands genoem is. Mense het vanaf die verskillende myne soontoe getrek en vir 'n baie lang tyd daar gebly. Hierdie verskuiwing het met die opkoms van nywerhede saamgeval. Die nywerheidsgebied was aan die ander kant van Syrian Town. Dit was eintlik Lebanese wat in Syrian Town gebly het, maar die mense het na hulle as Syrians verwys. Hulle het eiendomme in daardie gedeelte van Benoni besit. Een van die families wat hieruit spruit, is die Fosters. Ant Hursna Foster was eintlik 'n Miss Toweel voor sy met oom Georgie Foster getrou het. Mense soos ant Sarah Hendricks-hulle het vanaf die myne na Syrian Town getrek.

Mnr. Billings se oupa het na Actonville getrek. Hulle het in 'n drievertrekhuis gewoon: voorhuis, slaapkamer en kombuis. Daar was ook 'n buitekamer. Die Magermans het agterna in die huis getrek.

Baie van die mense het in die omgewing van die myne gebly totdat die myne toegemaak het. Een so 'n voorbeeld is die Rhodes-familie van juffrou Joan van Ross. Eers toe het hulle na Actonville Uitbreiding 1 getrek. Uitbreiding 1 is Katanga genoem, na aanleiding van die geweld wat daardie tyd in die Katangaprovinsie in die Kongo uitgebreek het. Mnr. September het kwaad geword as daar na die area as Katanga verwys is! Hy het op die regte naam, Actonville Uitbreiding 1, aangedring. Die geweld onder die jeug was die gevolg van die twee groepe mense wat daar beland het, uit Benoni en Modderfontein onderskeidelik. Mnr. Billings lig die patroonmatigheid van die geweld uit: mense word ontwortel, kom in 'n vreemde gebied aan waar hulle vreemde mense ontmoet, en gemoedere ontvlam.

Cape Stands was nie 'n uitgestrekte gebied nie, maar daar het heelwat mense gewoon. Die bruin

Ronald Billings en Noelene Botha op hulle troudag (Billings-versameling).

mense se afgebakende gebied het in Agste Laan begin en vanaf 1ste tot 4de Straat gestrek. Vanaf die Ebenezer Kerk, die polisiestasie en die kliniek tot by Derde Laan asook vanaf Vyfde Straat in die rigting van die treinspoor het swart mense gewoon. Langs die polisiestasie was Arnold Selby se winkel waaruit die African National Congress sy aktiwiteite bedryf het. Die koerant *New Age* is hiervandaan versprei en juf. Billings se ma het dit getrou gelees. Dit is ook die plek waar die struggle-veteraan Mary Moodley en haar dogters gewerk het. Juf. Billings onthou dat die verbanning van die koerant in die laaste uitgawe in 'n strokiesprent simbolies uitgebeeld is as 'n jongmeisie wie se kop afgekap word.

Die Indiërs het vanaf Derde Laan tot aan die treinspoor gebly. Hulle gebied is die Asiatic Bazaar genoem. Oorkant die treinspoor het swart mense gebly. Dit is OverLine genoem, waar Wattville vandag is. Dit is die gebied waar die ANC-leier OR Tambo destyds gebly het.

Ant Phillis Martin-hulle se huis was die enigste een wat 'n telefoon gehad het. Die rede? Hulle het die Prudential Society behartig. Baie mense het aan hierdie vereniging behoort. Hulle het 'n kamer vir doodkiste gereserveer.

Juf. Billings onthou dat ant Dolly Fredericks vanaf Doornfontein gereis het om vir die kinders klavierlesse aan te bied. Die onderrig was egter nie vir almal beskore nie, slegs kinders wie se ouers hierdie luukse kon bekostig soos Pearly du Plessis, Hillary Martin, Cathy Fransch, Louise Few en Donald Opperman het hierdie voorreg geniet.

Tydens die Tweede Wêreldoorlog is baie mynwerkers vir diens opgeroep. Met hulle terugkeer is hulle met geskenke soos fietse betaal. Ene oom Os het byvoorbeeld 'n perd en trollie ontvang, maar toe hardloop die perd weg en oom Os verkoop die trollie. Kort daarna het die perd teruggekeer, maar hy was sy trollie kwyt. Die huise in Actonville waar die onderwysers gebly het, was vir teruggekeerde soldate bedoel. Hulle het aan bomskok gely en die geringste gedruis het tot wegkruipaksies gelei daarom is die huise met betonplafonne gebou om geraas te elimineer. Hierdie huise is agterna aan die onderwysers gegee.

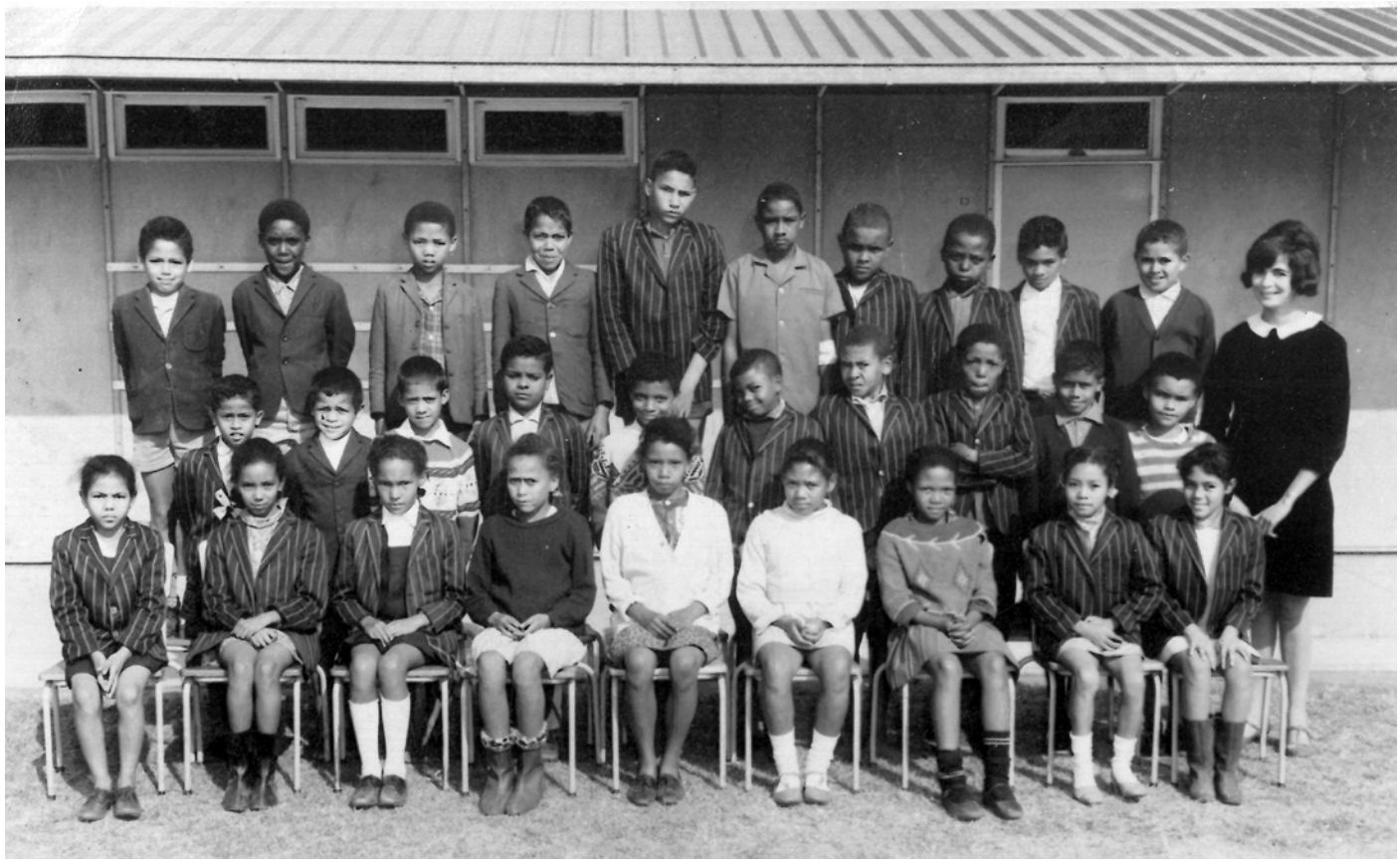
William Hills Hoërskool het in 1932 al bestaan. Dit was eers digby die Chalmers Hotel en 'n dam naby die dorp. Dit is later na die bruin woonbuurt verskuif. Die skool is genoem na die redakteur van die *Benoni City Times*. Hy het gewoonlik die pryse tydens prysuitdeling kom oorhandig. William Hills was sowel 'n primêre as 'n hoërskool, maar glad nie groot nie.

Ronald Billings (staande, sesde van links) met personeel van die Reigerpark Laerskool (Billings-versameling).

Alfred, die seun van mnr. Jansen, een van die vroeë hoofde van William Hills, het in 2010 uit Skotland kom kuier. Hy was toe reeds 85 jaar oud. Hy is in 1949 Engeland toe om medies te studeer, tot die blydskap van die inwoners van Benoni, want hy sou geskiedenis maak deur die eerste bruin dokter in Benoni te word. Juf. Billings onthou nog hoe haar ma vir haar gesê het: "Jou juffrou se seun gaan Engeland toe, hy gaan vir 'n dokter leer." Maar hy het toe wetenskap studeer. Alfred het 'n afskrif van 'n William Hills-personeelfoto wat uit die 1930's dateer, uit Skotland aangestuur. Die Billings-egpaar het hierdie foto met groot opgewondenheid te voorskyn gebring en hulle kon name by die gesigte voeg.

Onder andere is die volgende personeellede uitgewys: mnr. Andrew Sampson, oupa van Spencer, die bekende haarkapper; mnr. Frank Jacobs, wat van Joodse afkoms was en die bynaam Hitler gehad het oor sy snor; hy het hoof op Germiston Primêr geword en later op CJ Botha Hoërskool in Bosmont; Mnr. Louis Clarke, ouer broer van Barry Clarke; mnr. Arthur Hobbs; mnr. Kallie van der Haer; mnr. Martin Ehrenreich, Kevin se pa; mnr. Cecil du Preez, wat met die hoof se suster Sabina getroud was, en later in Coronationville naby die saal gaan bly het; die hoof se jonger broer, Alec Jansen; mnr. Alec Jooste, Pat se pa; Edith Hendry; juf. Arendse, wat soos 'n filmster gelyk het; Nettie Burns, Mabel Jansen, wat juf. Billings en haar broer Rodney se graad 1 onderwyseres was, en juf. Zini.

Baie personeellede het oor grade beskik wat deel van die aanspreekvorm geword het. Voorbeelde is mnr. Max Felix, BA Engels; mnr. Ontong, BA geskiedenis; mnr. Abdullah, BA Latyn, wat die gewoonte gehad het om sy klas in Latyn te groet. Mnr. Abdullah: *Salvete, puellae et pueri* (Wees gegroet, dogters en seuns), waarop die klas geantwoord het: *Salve, magister*. Toe juf. Billings met haar hoërskoolloopbaan op William Hills begin, was juf. Frances Barlow die enigste bruin onderwyseres met 'n BA- graad in Transvaal. Van die leerders aan William Hills het elke dag vanaf Coronationville, Noordgesig, Randfontein en Heidelberg daarheen gereis. Die 14:08 trein op Benoni-stasie was vol kinders vanaf Johannesburg. Geen wonder die leerlinge het van ver af soontoe gereis nie: William Hills het die reputasie gehad dat die beste



Laerskool Reigerpark, standerd 2, 1969. Juffrou Noelene Botha (getr. Billings), regs agter met haar klas. Middelry, vierde van links een van die Volmink-broers. Agter heellinks: Trevor Kirk (Kirk-versameling).

onderwysers daar onderrig het. Van die onderwysers het onder meer vanaf Randfontein en Noordgesig gereis.

Oor *passing,* om "wit te speel", en die tema van kleur het die Billingse heelwat te vertel gehad. Vir talle was dit allesbehalwe 'n speletjie. Die Beukes-gesin moes byvoorbeeld uit die dorp trek na die afsterwe van hul pa, 'n wit man. Hulle het by ouma Stoplight (jy hoef nie te wonder hoe sy aan dié naam gekom nie!) ingetrek. Hulle was 'n helse klomp kinders, almal baie lig van kleur en met tipiese wit name, byvoorbeeld Lettie en Gert. Daar was ook onderwysers by William Hills wat "wit gespeel het". Toe een so 'n persoon by die Chalmers Hotel as "wit" inboek, het 'n familielid haar by die bestuur gaan verkla. Dan was daar die geval van 'n ander persoon wat, toe sy siek word, nie in die hospitaal deur haar bruin familielede besoek kon word nie; slegs haar broer en suster, wat soos sy wit gespeel het, kon haar besoek. Daar was leerlinge by William Hills wat hulle tuis as "wit" voorgedoen het. Dan was daar op die ander spektrum 'n insident toe 'n plaaslike tennisspan vir 'n kampioenskap in 'n dorp op die Wesrand aangemeld het en een lid toegang geweier is omdat hy kwansuis nie bruin kon wees nie, maar swart. Met die koning se besoek in 1947 was ook Boksburg op sy reisplan. Die probleem was egter die Indiër-gebied bekend as Kalamazoo in Reigerpark. Dit was na aan die hoofstraat geleë en so onooglik dat plan gemaak moes word, en sommer gou ook! Die oplossing? Span 'n seil oor die gebied! En op die koning se vraag wat daaronder is, was die antwoord:

die stoorkamer van die spoorweë!

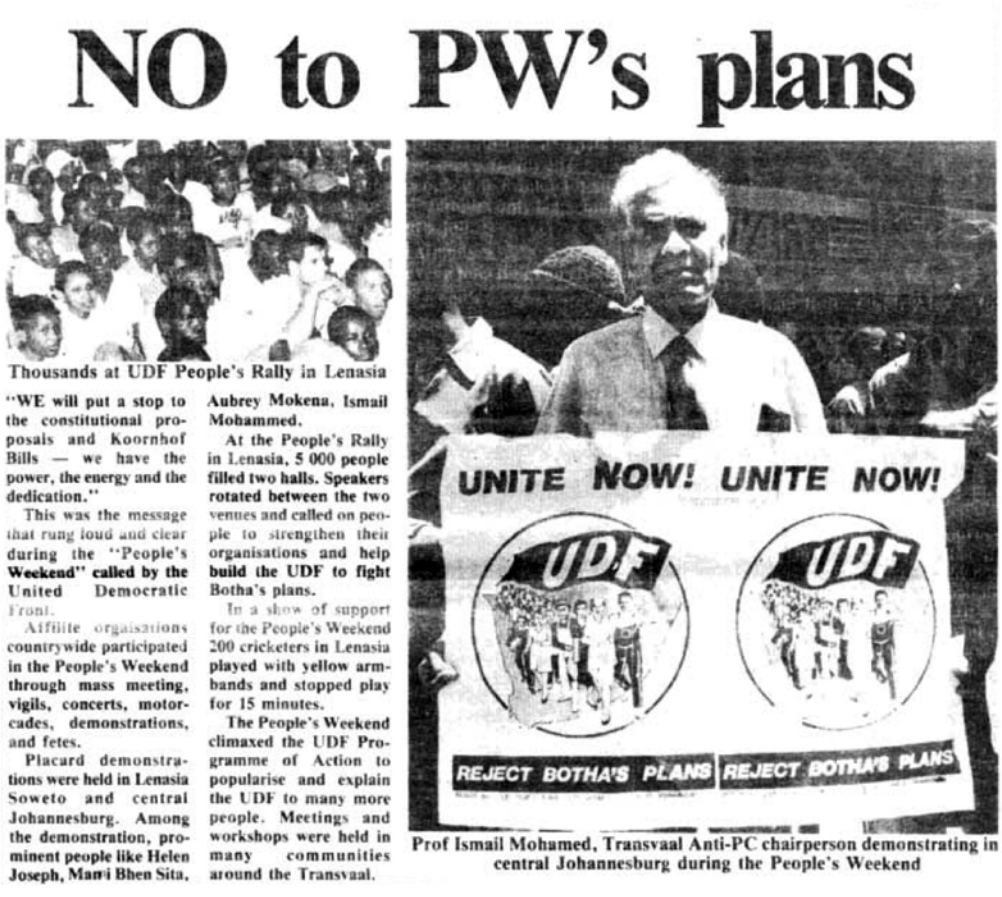
Asof apartheid nie genoeg was nie, het dit ook weerklank gevind onder bruin mense. Met die opening van Laerskool Drommedaris is leerlinge en leerkragte vanaf Benoni na Reigerpark oorgeplaas. By Laerskool Reigerpark moes elke onderwyser ook drie leerders uit sy of haar klas aanwys wat na Drommedaris oorgeplaas moes word. Die uiteinde was dat die owerhede leerders gekies het wat op die oog af swart vanne gehad het. Die ironie van hierdie "apartheid binne apartheid" kan nie misgekyk word nie. Hoërskool Oosrand het ook nie vrygespring nie. Hier is op 'n neerhalende wyse na 'n spesifieke gesin se kinders wat donker van kleur was, verwys.

In 1959 het mnr. Billings matriek met onderskeiding geslaag en is op die Universiteit van die Witwatersrand aanvaar om medies te studeer. Sy aansoek is egter deur die minister afgekeur. Hy is liewers na die nuutgestigte Universiteitskollege van Wes-Kaapland verwys, wat nie oor 'n mediese fakulteit beskik het nie. Hy sou met 'n beurs van die Rotariërs gaan studeer het. Dit was hom nie beskore om die eerste bruin dokter van Benoni, soos die hoof, mnr. Barthes, gehoop het, te word nie. Hy moes noodgedwonge gaan werk: 'n rukkie by 'n ploeg-plek, daarna by die Departement van Arbeid in Breëstraat. Een dag tydens die middaguurpouse het hy net besluit hy het genoeg gehad en dat hy verder gaan studeer.

Sy werkgewer, mnr. Uys, het gereeld laat val dat hy hoog kan uitstyg indien hy die eksamen vir staatsamptenare sou aflê. Toe mnr. Billings hom vir 'n getuigskrif vra, het hy vir die eerste keer regtig met sy werkgewer kennis gemaak. Mnr. Uys was baie opgewonde dat hy beplan om verder te gaan studeer. Hy het sommer daar en dan die telefoon opgetel en die Randse Onderwyskollege (ROK) gevra om die aansoekvorms te kom aflewer. Nodeloos om te sê, mnr. Billings kon kwalik sy verbasing wegsteek. Eers later sou hy uitvind dat mnr. Uys 'n lid van die Broederbond was en derhalwe baie invloedryk. Tot vandag toe weet mnr. Billings nie waarom hy in hom belangstelling getoon het nie. Dit was algemeen bekend dat dosente aan die ROK spesiaal aangestel is op grond van hul lidmaatskap van die Broederbond. Toe die Departement van Kleurlingsake die bestuur van die onderwyskollege oorneem, is al die dosente tot inspekteurs bevorder.

Dit was verpligtend vir studente wat kollege toe reis om in die koshuis te bly. Mnr. Billings kon nie inwoon nie omdat hy deeltyds moes werk om sy beurs aan te vul. Sy ouers moes 'n brief aan die kollege skryf vir toestemming om nie in te woon nie. Hy het soggens voor klas by 'n Chinese winkel gewerk, wat reeds om vyfuur oopgemaak het. Smiddae het hy gehelp met ekstra klasse vir sy werkgewer se kinders. As die winkel toe was, het hulle karate geoefen. Mnr. Billings het op hierdie manier 'n paar katas geleer. Hy het ook geleer dat jy nie alles oor karate hoef te ken nie. Dit sou hom later jare goed te pas kom, maar later meer hieroor.

In 1962 is die Billingse per brief in kennis gestel dat 'n nuwe gebied in Boksburg, genaamd Reigerpark, vir die bruin mense ontwikkel gaan word. Sekere dele van dorpe op die Oosrand is stadig maar seker "skoongemaak" van bruin, Indiër- en swart mense. Daar is 'n vereniging in Benoni gestig, die Vigilance Association, om die verskuiwing teen te staan. Die lede het meestal uit "geleerde", dus professionele mense bestaan, soos die De Jager-broers en Sonnyboy Jacobs. Reigerpark was aanvanklik vir die Indiërs bedoel, en die naam sou Zindabad wees. Benoni se stadsraad wou die bruin mense behou en Wattville aan hulle toesê. Die gevolg was 'n saak in die hooggeregshof, waarvan die uiteinde was dat die bruin mense geforseer is om Reigerpark toe te verhuis. Die Boksburg munisipaliteit het beloof om die bestaande huise op te knap en te verf, en twintig nuwe huise is gebou. In Benoni is van die bruin mense deur die Indiër-huisbase uitgebuit. Hulle het onder haglike omstandighede in blikhuisies gebly, waarvoor hulle ten duurste huur moes betaal. Hierdie mense was



NO to PW's plans

Thousands at UDF People's Rally in Lenasia

"WE will put a stop to the constitutional proposals and Koornhof Bills — we have the power, the energy and the dedication."

This was the message that rung loud and clear during the "People's Weekend" called by the United Democratic Front.

Affiliate organisations countrywide participated in the People's Weekend through mass meeting, vigils, concerts, motorcades, demonstrations, and fetes.

Placard demonstrations were held in Lenasia Soweto and central Johannesburg. Among the demonstration, prominent people like Helen Joseph, Mawi Bhen Sita, Aubrey Mokena, Ismail Mohammed.

At the People's Rally in Lenasia, 5 000 people filled two halls. Speakers rotated between the two venues and called on people to strengthen their organisations and help build the UDF to fight Botha's plans.

In a show of support for the People's Weekend 200 cricketers in Lenasia played with yellow armbands and stopped play for 15 minutes.

The People's Weekend climaxed the UDF Programme of Action to popularise and explain the UDF to many more people. Meetings and workshops were held in many communities around the Transvaal.

UNITE NOW! UNITE NOW!

UDF UDF

REJECT BOTHA'S PLANS REJECT BOTHA'S PLANS

Prof Ismail Mohamed, Transvaal Anti-PC chairperson demonstrating in central Johannesburg during the People's Weekend

Prof. Ismail Mohamed was Ronald Billings se onderwyser (*Speak*, Januarie 1984).

daarom van die eerstes wat Reigerpark toe getrek het. Met die Groepsgebiedewet moes ook wit besighede die bruin gebiede verlaat. Voorbeelde was Epstein, Schneider en Gieschen. Hulle was Joods, en dus as wit geklassifiseer.

Toe mnr. Billings begin skoolhou, het William Hills 'n skool net vir Indiërs geword. Hy het toe 'n pos in Alexandra township by 'n middelbare skool gekry, waar hy tot 1968 skoolgehou het. Die skool is deur die Ebenezer Kerk gebou en aan die department verhuur. Hierdie gebou het tot in die vroeë 1990's bly staan. Nog voordat mnr. Billings in Alex gaan skoolhou het, was dit 'n intellektuele kern wat baie geleerde mense opgelewer het. Dit was die tuiste vir 'n mengelmoes van mense, met geen afgebakende gebied vir spesifieke rasse nie, al was die Indiër-besighede oorwegend in Eerste Laan geleë. Toe die verskynsel van *gangsterism* begin vlam vat en die Groepsgebiedewet ingestel is, het die mense Alex se stof van hul voete begin afskud.

Mnr. Steve Farrah en ander onderwysers van Coronationville het ook daar skoolgehou. Mnr. Billings onthou dat daar nie 'n groot skoolterrein was nie; langsaan die skool was daar 'n grofsmid waar geharde ouens sit en dagga rook het. Mnr. Billings sou die venster oopmaak en hulle inlig dat hy besig is om skool te hou en dat hulle bietjie respek moes toon, waarop hulle dan ewe gehoorsaam geantwoord het: "Oukei T, ons verstaan T", en dan die omgewing verlaat het. As inkommer moes mnr. Billings versigtig wees, want hy moes nog smiddae busstop toe stap. Hy het egter niks te vrese gehad nie; wanneer hy smiddae die gebied verlaat, sou hy van alle kante af hoor: "Hei T! Daai's onse T!"

Tydens sy eerste jaar van onderwys en waarneming het hy tot die besef gekom dat daar eintlik niks op Alex aangaan nie. Tydens sy tweede jaar het hy die gevoel gekry: jy leer die leerders om níks te word nie. Baie van sy kollegas het maar min belangstelling in die leerders se toekoms getoon. Hy het met sy leerders begin praat en hulle gevra of hulle nie skaam kry nie, want waar is Alex se eie onderwysers? Wat gaan van hulle word? Die voorligtingonderwyser was ene mnr. Williams

van Riverlea wat sy eie vervoer gehad het. Mnr. Billings het hom gevra om aansoekvorms by die onderwyskollege en hospitaal te gaan haal en aangebied om vir sy petrol te betaal. Hy het die vorms lukraak uitgedeel met die woorde: "Jy gaan 'n onderwyser word. Jy gaan 'n verpleegster word." Die leerders is aangesê om die vorms deur hul ouers te laat teken, die skool sou die res invul.

Jare later, by Sun City, die hotelkompleks naby Rustenburg, het hy een van hierdie leerders raakgeloop wat hom vir sy betrokkenheid bedank het. Tydens sy hospitaalbehandeling teen kanker het hy 'n verpleegster raakgeloop wat hom gevra het of hy haar onthou, want sy is in verpleging as gevolg van hom. Was haar verbasing groot toe hy haar van onthou! Mnr. Billings onthou dat daar wel swart skole in Alex was, maar dat daar min akademiese klasonderrig plaasgevind het. Die leerders het mandjies gemaak en probeer tuinmaak in die harde grond. Hier was onderwys vir swart leerlinge uiters gebrekkig!

Toe mnr. Billings op Reigerpark begin skoolhou, sou hy die teenoorgestelde ervaring beleef. Hy het gevind dat die onderwysers die leerlinge gevrees het. Skobbejakke sou buite sit, en weier om die skoolterrein te verlaat. Een so 'n karakter het dit lelik ontgeld. Mnr. Billings het hom gewaarsku om pad te gee, maar hy wou nie hoor nie. Hy is een dag deur die onderwysers aangekeer en in 'n kamer langs die kantoor sitgemaak, waar mnr. Billings hom gaan konfronteer het. Hy het hom met vuishoue en 'n bietjie karate (wat hy destyds by die Chinese geleer het) bygedam. Die hoof se broer het hom kom help. Dit was sy redding, want toe hierdie karakter se pa 'n saak teen hulle aanhangig wou maak, het die hoof en een van sy senior onderwysers tussenbeide getree en die pa oorreed om die saak terug te trek. Sou die pa voortgegaan het met die saak, sou mnr. Billings sleg daarvan afgekom het. Mnr. Billings se onderonsie met genoemde karakter het die gewenste uitwerking gehad. Die skobbejakke het besef dat hy nie met hom laat lol nie.

Toe hy eendag in die tyd toe dit nog wettig was sy matriekklas gefoeter het omdat hulle na herhaalde versoeke nie huiswerk wou doen nie, was dit die besprekingspunt in die personeelkamer. Daarna het hy nooit ooit weer enige probleem met sy leerders gehad nie. Hier en daar het iemand sy gesag probeer uitdaag, soos Cravin Collis, 'n moeilike leerder in sy klas wat wou hê hy moes wiskundeprobleme uit 'n matriekvraestel verduidelik. Hoe meer mnr. Billings vir hom verduidelik dat hulle nog daardie werk moes behandel, hoe meer interpreteer Collis dit dat hy nie vertroud is met die inhoud nie. Hy het toe geen keuse gehad nie as om die spesifieke probleem te verduidelik, al was dit bokant die leerder se vuurmaakplek! Dit is hoe hy sy gesag afgedwing het. Mnr. Billings het eers getob of hy die regte ding gedoen het deur matrikulante te foeter, maar tot die gevolgtrekking gekom dat dit die gewenste uitwerking gehad het. Syns insiens is die dilemma vandag dat daar op die oog af geen effektiewe alternatiewe vir lyfstraf is nie. Einste Collis het later 'n onderwyser en politikus geword en dis maar één van die suksesverhale. Johnny Issel was op UWK toe hy sy gewese onderwyser probeer vasvra het met sistematiese filosofie. Aan die einde moes hy erken: "Dié toppie weet waarvan hy praat!"

Die Billings-egpaar praat met bewondering van prof. Ismail "Issy" Mohamed. Hy was mnr. Billings se st. 8 wiskunde-onderwyser. 'n Leerling, Ellen, sou later sy eggenoot word! Hy het in Engeland onder 'n Rus studeer. Na sy studies is hy 'n professoraat in Amerika aangebied, maar het dit van die hand gewys om na sy vaderland terug te keer. Twee dae na sy terugkeer het hy tydens 'n kuiertjie in Nigel aspekte van die Engelse onderwysstelsel met sy gaste bespreek, veral anekdotes oor dissipline, onder andere hoe die leerlinge hulle musiek in die klaskamer sou aanskakel, of naelpolitoer aansmeer! By aanskoue van Nigel se huise het hy gesug: "To think we gave all up for this … we are still in shanty town … but we are glad to be back."

Met die implementering van die Groepsgebiedewet en die aanvang van streng

rasgebaseerde onderwys het baie onderwysers die land verlaat en hul onder andere in Kanada gevestig. Omdat soveel van hulle uit die Kaap afkomstig was, het die gebied waar hulle hulle gevestig het, as Cape Canada bekend gestaan. Diegene wat die land verlaat het, het vroeg geleer dat dit beter was om 'n retoerkaartjie te koop. Dit het hul kanse verhoog om 'n paspoort te bekom. Op hierdie punt sug juf. Billings: "Ai, maar die wit mense was maar diskriminerend."

Ontwikkeling in Reigerpark is baiemaal gestriem deur die inwoners self. Meer as een persoon wie se bydrae in hierdie boek opgeneem is, het al na die pragtige tennisbane verwys. Mnr. Billings het goeie bedoelings gehad toe hy met 'n groep leerders by die tennisbane opdaag. Hy het eers dat die skool nette en rakette aankoop. Terloops, die tennisbane was die eiendom van die munisipaliteit en as sodanig het mnr. Billings toestemming by mnr. Oberholzer vir die gebruik van die bane gekry. Toe die groep kinders daar kom, was daar een ander speler, 'n senior inwoner, oom Tolla Hendriks. Na hierdie besoek het mnr. September vir mnr. Billings laat roep en hom ingelig dat hy nie toestemming het om die bane te gebruik nie. Mnr. Billings se verweer dat hy toestemming by mnr. Gerry Oberholzer, die superintendent van Reigerpark gekry het, het op dowe ore geval. Mnr. September wou hê dat hy by die tennisunie moes aansoek doen, en die name van die leerders en die onderwysers betrokke in die register aanteken. Mnr. Billings het nie beplan dat die leerders vir die plaaslike tennisunie sou speel nie, maar vir skolesport. Om 'n lang storie kort te maak, toe hy weer met die groep aspirant tennisspelers by die bane aankom, was die hek gesluit. Mnr. Billings verwys na sy nietige poging wat ondersteun moes word, eerder as om dit in die wiele te ry!

Nog 'n voorbeeld was die leerplan wat by die hoërskool aangebied is. Dit het wetenskap en wiskunde uitgesluit. Met betrekking tot matriekuitslae was die neiging om op kwantiteit in plaas van kwaliteit te fokus. Mnr. Billings het sterk aanvoorwerk vir die invoer van hierdie twee vakke gedoen, maar die hoof se woorde was dat hulle nie met wetenskap en wiskunde gaan foeter nie, en dat dit slegs 'n gesukkel sou afgee. Mnr. Billings het teruggeantwoord: "Ons foeter nie met wiskunde en wetenskap nie, ons bou die volk op." Die volgende dag het hy uit die bloute vir die hoof gevra wat sy seun se toekomsplanne is. Die hoof het oop oë in die strik getrap en geantwoord dat sy seun 'n loods wou word. Toe mnr. Billings ewe onskuldig opmerk dat dit nooit sou gebeur nie, dat hy sy seun by 'n ander skool moes inskryf, het dit tot 'n bekgeveg tussen hulle gelei. Maar aan die einde het die hoof tot insig gekom, en vir mnr. Billings gevra om alle vorms voor te berei wat hy dan sou teken.

Nog was dit het einde niet! Uit watter lug sou 'n wetenskaponderwyser val? Mnr. Ernest Usher is oorreed om wetenskap aan te bied. Sy besware is uit die weg geruim met die voorstel dat hy die vakinhoud moes instudeer. Menige leerder sal kan getuig watter fantastiese werk mnr. Usher gedoen het. Toe hy later 'n bevorderingspos by Laerskool Drommedaris kry, het hy sy vak prakties benader en dit so vir die leerders verstaanbaar gemaak. Toe was dit nog rewolusionêr om 'n régte vis en 'n régte akkedis in die klas te hê. Juf. Billings onthou dat dit mnr. Usher was wat haar geleer het om die byskrifte onder mekaar en nie rond en bont nie, by 'n skets te skryf.

Ter afsluiting: mnr. Billings glo dat daar 'n mate van ontwikkeling in Reigerpark was, maar dat die gebied beter kon gedoen het. Daar was wel sakegeleenthede, hoewel onvoldoende. Behuising, soos veral in Galeview, kon ook baie beter verloop het sou die eienaars al vroeër die reg gekry het om hul huise te vergroot. Hier en daar waar 'n huis uitstaan, is waar 'n eienaar in sy huis belê het. In mnr. Billings se eie woorde: Ons sit nog met die nasleep van die wit mense se twak!

30 Januarie 2020

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Glen Volmink en sy familie van Alex

Cecil H Morden

Glen Volmink is op 17 November 1956 in Alexander township gebore. Sy gesin het op die hoek van Sewende Laan en Vasco da Gamastraat gebly. Sy pa, William Charles Volmink, is in Orange Grove gebore en sy ma, Frieda Josephine (geb. Richen) in Wynberg. Sy oupa aan moederskant, Johnny Richen, was 'n Indiër. In 1959 het hul gesin na Newclare verhuis. Sy pa het geweier om na Noordgesig toe te trek, maar sy ouma-hulle aan vaderskant, Elizabeth Volmink, geb. Billings, het wel soontoe getrek. Daarna het Glen-hulle vir 'n wyle in Kentuckylaan, Riverlea, gewoon voordat hulle in 1964 na Galeview in Stirtonville, Boksburg, verhuis het. Galeview se huise het toe nog misvloere gehad. Sy pa het Boksburg verkies omdat hy 'n erf in Reigerpark (Uitbreiding 1) kon koop. Mnr. RC Billings (Charles, soms Ronnie genoem) se pa, Frank Billings, en Glen se ouma Elizabeth aan sy pa se kant was broer en suster.

Glen onthou in ons onderhoud dat op daardie stadium die woonbuurt Stirtonville nog heeltemal omhein was. Daar was 'n hoofhek in die omgewing waar die huidige Reigerpark polisiekantoor is wat toegang tot die woonbuurt beheer het. Daar naby was administrasiekantore wat jare later, in 1981, afgebrand is. Dan was daar ook 'n paar geboue wat 'n poskantoor ingesluit het. Dr. Lionel Cutting het hier sy eerste spreekkamer gehad. Oom Gun Botha het daar naby *carrier bags* vervaardig en ant Valerie Perry het groente verkoop.

Daar was ook 'n klein voetgangershek in Magotlastraat, deesdae Buttercupstraat, aan die onderpunt van Galeview waar hulle gewoon het. Die heel laaste straat in Galeview was Pinzistraat, vandag Leeubekkiestraat. Sy pa se broer, Harold Volmink, het ook Stirtonville toe getrek. Sy ouma (Lilly Richen) aan sy ma se kant het egter in Alexander township aangebly.

Later het baie van die bruin mense van Alexander township, Klipspruit-Wes (Nancefield) toe getrek. Sy ouma-hulle het egter in die 1970's Rabie Ridge toe getrek. Ander families wat uit Alexander township na Reigerpark verhuis het, was

die Crawfords en die Eustaces. Glen se niggie, Doris Volmink, is met Henry Crawford getroud.

Sy oupa, Fred Volmink, se broer John was die genomineerde eienaar van Kings bioskoop in Alexander township en het ook ander eiendomme in die gebied besit.

Dieselfde jaar toe sy gesin Galeview toe getrek het, in 1964, het Glen vir 'n wyle by sy tante, Vera Hayter, in Malawi gaan bly en ook daar skoolgegaan. Aan die begin van 1965 het hy teruggekom Boksburg toe en kon nie veel Afrikaans praat nie. Die hoof van Reigerpark Laerskool het toe aanbeveel dat hy weer in Sub A begin, en so het hy as 8-jarige saam met sy twee broers, Neville en Malcolm, in Sub A beland.

Glen-hulle het vir ongeveer 18 maande in Galeview gewoon voordat hulle in 1966 in hul nuutgeboude huis op die hoek van Drommedaris- en Jakarandastraat getrek het. Sy broer Freddie, gebore in September 1966, en sy suster Vanessa is later daar gebore. Hulle was ses kinders: hy, Neville, Malcolm, Vera, Freddie en Vanessa. Malcolm is in 2015 aan maagkanker oorlede.

Sy onderwysers en onderwyseresse op Reigerpark Laerskool was: Sub A, Mary Collins; Sub B, Myrtel Clements; standerd 1, Miela Swarts; standerd 2, juffrou Maria Elizabeth Eustace; standerd 3, mnr. Everett Clements en standerd 4, mnre. Sydney (Tolla) Beck en Jaffie Abrahams. Tydens sy standerd 4-jaar moes hulle vir 'n tyd lank middagskool bywoon. Dit was nie juis 'n aangename ervaring nie omdat hulle smiddae moeg gespeel by die skool aangekom het. Hy het standerd 5 in 1970 voltooi en sy hoërskoolloopbaan in Johannesburg in 1971 begin. In 1972 is hy na Good Hope Kollege in Sarepta, Kuilsrivier, daarna na Alexander Sinton en toe terug na Johannesburg. Sy broers Neville en Malcolm asook sy suster Vanessa het ook in die Kaap skoolgegaan. Hy voltooi sy matriek deur aandklasse of *nocturnal* klasse, aldus die grapjas, by St Anthony's in Reigerpark by te woon. Hy onthou vir suster Gabriel. Vanaf 1980 tot 1986 was hy 'n vakleerling by Gallian, deel van die Sullivanprojek, en kwalifiseer as 'n diesel hidrouliese-passer in 1986.

Tydens sy vakleerlingjare het hy begin om deeltyds waterlose potte te verkoop, eers vir AMC Classic en toe vir Nutristahl. Hy het in 1980 getrou met Ashline von Buchenroder, en in 1981 'n nasionale verkoopskompetisie gewen. Sy tegniese kennis oor die samestelling van waterlose potte is vlymskerp, selfs vandag nog. Nadat hy sy vakleerlingskap in 1986 voltooi het, het hy egter verkies om sy loopbaan as verkoopsman voort te sit. Hy het 'n werksaanbod in Malawi gekry, maar sy vrou het dit duidelik gemaak dat sy nié saam met hom Malawi toe sal verhuis nie. Vir 'n ruk lank het hy vir Jerry Theys gehelp om advertensiespasies vir *The Beam* te verkoop. In die proses het hy kontak met Intercity Nissan gemaak, wat hom toe 'n werk as verkoopsman aangebied het. Eugene Delfafa het op hierdie stadium ook vir Intercity Nissan gewerk. Glen is vir 'n paar jaar as topverkoper aangewys. Later het hy vir George Foster by sy Nissan-tak in High Gate gaan werk. Toe is hy na Auckland Park Nissan waar hy gekonsentreer het op die verkope van Nissan minibustaxi's. Hy het ook vir 'n tydjie met huise gespekuleer.

Glen, sy pa en broer Neville het in 1981 'n familiebesigheid in Surityville, Nigel, begin. Dit is die Golden Centre genoem en het uit 'n supermark, slaghuis en groentewinkel bestaan. Hulle het hierdie besigheid vir vier jaar bedryf en dit toe verkoop. Daarna het hulle 'n bakkery in Reigerpark geopen. Sy pa was ook betrokke in die matras- en houtbedryf. Sy oom Harold Volmink het 'n meubelfabriek in Reigerpark begin. Sy jongste broer, Freddie, besit die winkelkompleks in Excuse Me en is woonagtig in Tedstoneville, Elsburg. Sy broers Neville en Malcolm het vir 20 jaar besighede in Midrand bedryf. Hulle het 'n erf van 24 000 vierkante meter daar gekoop en 'n derde daarvan aan die kerk geskenk, Die kerk, Mount Calvary, bestaan vandag nog. Sy pa, William, het tot met sy

afsterwe op die ouderdom van 72 jaar vir Malcolm met sy besigheid in Midrand gehelp.

Behalwe vir sy tydelike verblyf in Malawi as kind en sy skooljare in die Kaap, is Glen sedert 1964 in Boksburg woonagtig, eers in Reigerpark, toe vanaf 1992 tot 1999 in Delmore Uitbreiding en nou in Plantasie. Sy broer Neville het 'n paar jaar gelede 'n kleinhoewe op De Rust in die omgewing van Oudtshoorn gekoop en boer daar op klein skaal. Sy ma woon tans by Neville. Sy jongste suster Vanessa is met dr. Lionel Cutting se seun Lesley getroud en woon in Melbourne, Australië. Sy ander suster, Vera, bly in Parkdene, Boksburg.

Glen noem dat die kerke in Reigerpark 'n belangrike rol in die gemeenskap gespeel het en steeds speel. Hy is egter bekommerd dat dit vir sommige predikante vandag meer oor die geld gaan. Die kerk waarvan hy lid is, die Sewendedag Adventiste, het as een van die kleiner kerke in Reigerpark begin. Van die eerste predikante was pastore Johann Abrahams, Harold Coombs, met wie se skoonsuster hy getroud is, en Brian Ismail.

As hy oor Reigerpark praat, is daar 'n warboel van emosies en herinneringe wat by hom opkom. Die woonbuurt het baie invloedryke persone opgelewer en ook baie berugte bendelede. Die mense van Reigerpark kan saamstaan as dit moet. Die gebeure in 1981 en 1988-89 dien as voorbeelde hiervan. Dan was daar ook tekens van maatskaplike klasseverskille. Hy het ervaar dat om in Reigerpark Uitbreiding 1 te bly, die gebied waar mense vanuit die staanspoor hulle eie erwe en huise besit het, gepaard gegaan het met 'n soort "stigma"; die waarneming was dat hierdie inwoners baie beter daaraan toe was as diegene in ander gebiede, in so 'n mate dat hy na skool deur sy klasmaats van Galeview geboelie is.

Hy verwys na Reigerpark as 'n *close knit community* en hoe persone soos oom Bobby Garson en mnr. Theron in Jakarandastraat indirek betrokke was by hom en sy vriende se opvoeding. Hy het ook later groot vriende geword met sy gewese onderwyser wat later 'n sakeman geword het, Everett Clements. Kersfees en Paasfees was twee besondere dae in die lewe van Reigerpark, en as kinders het hulle uitgesien na hierdie dae.

Hy het goeie herinneringe aan sy kinderdae en vriende. Hier verwys hy na persone soos Ockert Fransch, Ernest van der Water, Delphine Seedat, Gêpie (Ian Julius), die Martin-broers (George en Chris) , Bernard Olsen, Basil Segeel, Alvin Morris en Cecil Morden. Hy noem 'n paar voorvalle waar hy en sy vriende taamlik ondeund was. Een hiervan was die dag toe hulle 'n vakansiewerk by Park Bakkery gekry het. Oom Colin Hank het vir hulle die werk gekry en sowat ses van hulle die dag in sy motor werk toe gery. Die ses was so ondeund dat hulle sommer dieselfde dag nog afgedank is. Oom Achmat Petersen het toe ook vir Park Bakkery gewerk. Hy onthou sy kinderdae as lekker dae en som dit op met 'n effense verdraaing van Rudyard Kipling se bekende gedig "If": "we encountered triumph and disaster but we learnt to treat those two impostors just the same."[1]

Bendegeweld was en is ongetwyfeld 'n klad op die naam van Reigerpark. In 'n mate het baie van die bendegeweld verband gehou met die verkope van dwelmmiddels, maar dit was ook territoriaal van aard. Sy oom Harold Volmink is in 1975 in geweld betrek toe hy 'n jongman uit selfverdediging doodgeskiet het. Glen noem dat die woonbuurt MM (Ma se moer) sy naam gekry het as gevolg van 'n voorval waarin 'n bendelid, George Balakistan, betrokke was. Dié se broers was ook berugte bendelede. Balakistan is grusaam deur die Foster-broers vermoor terwyl lede van die Tigers-bende sy broer Gutu vermoor het. Die misbruik van dwelmmiddels raak ongelukkig baie families in Reigerpark. Glen se gesin is ook geraak toe een van sy seuns met dwelmmiddels betrokke geraak het. Hy is gelukkig vandag ten volle gerehabiliteer.

Van die "formele" politiek in die laat 1960's en 1970's onthou hy die verkiesings vir die Verteenwoordigende Kleurlingraad en partye soos

die Federale, Arbeiders- en Nasionale Party. Die partye se plaaslike leiers was onderskeidelik Jac Rabie, Simon Mentor en Clarence September. Beide Clarence September en Jac Rabie het later, alhoewel nie op dieselfde tyd nie, na die Arbeidersparty oorgestap.

Hy praat met lof van dr. Agatha Wilhase as een van die mees toegewyde mediese dokters in Reigerpark. Sy ervaring met dr. Nagdee was nie baie positief nie; dr. Kamala Patel en haar eggenoot dr. Singh, wat al die jare sy praktyk in Benoni het, was maar al die jare baie op hul eie.

Vandat hy in Plantasie woon, het hy ietwat kontak met die gemeenskap van Reigerpark verloor alhoewel hy die gebied gereeld besoek. Hy hoop dat die gemeenskap van Reigerpark 'n groter eenheid sal ontwikkel en die meeste van hul onderlinge geskille sal kan bylê.

6 Oktober 2021

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Remembering Reiger Park

Henry Jeffreys

A forced removal

My relationship with Reiger Park is an odd one. I mean, how do you feel about a place you were forced to move to? Picture now, as you're reading this in your home, that there is a knock on your door. You open and find some sort of authority figure standing there telling you to pack up your things because they've decided to move you somewhere else. How would you react? Not pleasantly I would assume.

This was the reality though for South Africans of colour under the apartheid regime. Many towns like Reiger Park exist across South Africa because of 'forced removals', a diabolical concept that resulted in human suffering and massive amounts of socioeconomic destruction still prevalent today.

Yet, I sometimes find myself forgetting about the harshness that led me to Reiger Park because some of my life's best memories happened in that town. We learned to love the place we were moved to and forgot the ones we were removed from.

Reiger Park is situated in a small city on the East Rand of Johannesburg, named Boksburg. The old, and now thankfully dead, nationalist government earmarked Boksburg as an economic zone for technological and industrial development. This venture required an educated labour force to be successful. The type of labour though, according to them, mattered. Hence the need for a 'better educated' Coloured workforce to be moved closer to where the 'smart' industries were to be located. Black people were not intended to become 'skilled' workers in the technological sphere.

I still find myself baffled today by the lunacy of the apartheid regime. They were so obsessed with their White superiority that they often correlated intelligence with skin colour. The fairer the skin, the more intelligent the individual. Black people, as a result, were considered the least intelligent. In the demented minds of the apartheid apologists, Black people were, at best, only capable of agricultural labour and were therefore subjected to 'Bantu education', an abhorrent form of education that

starved them of appropriate infrastructure, facilities, and opportunities.

Coloured and Indian people on the other hand, were supposedly different, hence their movement closer to the so-called 'smarter' areas of industry and technology. Naturally, and I think intentionally, this created a form of classism among the oppressed, namely all people of colour.

Another important factor to note is that forced removals were not done in an isolated manner. In other words, Coloured people from Benoni were not the only Coloureds moved to Reiger Park. There were often two or three coloured communities from places like Edenvale, Albertsville or Germiston all shoved into this new community all at once. This naturally led to tensions between the different communities. It took some time for Reiger Park to gel as a community.

A source of labour

At the time Boksburg had a substantial community of Black people located in the township of Stirtonville. There were supposedly no limits on the education of Coloured people, so in their warped wisdom, the apartheid thinkers decided to move the Coloured community from the neighbouring city of Benoni and to establish Reiger Park for them, i.e., Coloured people, to serve as labour for the emerging industrial and technological future city, Boksburg.

One such technological firm that was to source its labour from the Coloured community in Reiger Park was Standard Telecommunications and Cables or STC as it became known. It quickly became the largest employer of mostly Coloured people, drawn from the newly established Reiger Park. I would estimate that almost every household in Reiger Park had a member working at STC. The firm employed virtually no Black people in the beginning.

To accommodate Black people a new, greenfield township – Vosloorus – was created and the Black people of Stirtonville were moved there. It was located south of Reiger Park and is today a vast modern township with its own identity.

News that they had to move to Boksburg was received with some, but limited, resistance by the Coloureds of Benoni. The community was not very political, despite the efforts of people like Mr Clarence September, a local school principal and Mr Bob Triegaardt, a local teacher. Their politics were highly focused on hyper-local issues. There was very little or no interest in the bigger national political issues pursued by organisations such as the African National Congress (ANC).

There were some local voices that opposed the removal, but nothing like the events that played out in Cape Town and Sophiatown in Johannesburg. I remember my mother going to some protest meetings. Despite not being very politically inclined, she felt a strong urge to be part of the group that voiced their resentment towards the forced removals. She, however, often came back disheartened by the lack of initiative and urgency of these meetings. I often wonder how my parents' generation felt about the oppression they lived under. Had they been oppressed to a point where they were almost resigned to their reality? From my perspective it appeared as though there wasn't a strong culture of political activism. That came with our generation and was sparked by the Soweto uprisings in 1976, which created awareness regarding the severity of human rights abuses suffered under apartheid.

The establishment of Reiger Park

It was said that some of the community leaders from Actonville were invited to visit the area intended for the establishment of Reiger Park to view land for a new upmarket housing area that they could buy cheaply.

At the time Stirtonville consisted of several distinct sections: Stirtonville proper, Galeview, Jerusalem, the Doubles, and the Singles. Jerusalem was a well-built area with solid brick houses while the Doubles

were two-room red brick structures and the Singles one-room ones. The latter was planned to house mineworkers brought to the old Transvaal from the old homelands and countries such as Malawi and Lesotho. None of the existing housing areas had any electricity or indoor plumbing.

In Actonville, Benoni, a new area called Katanga had just been built with electricity and indoor toilets and water. This caused a big gripe among the people of Actonville who were relocated. They were unhappy about moving into houses without electricity and indoor toilets. The unhappiness never reached levels to fuel serious resistance to the forced removal.

Moving in the cold

A month or so before our move from Actonville to Reiger Park, we unexpectedly woke up to new neighbours. The new neighbours were Indian. They had been moved from a nearby area named 'Old Location'. It was an area consisting of mostly corrugated iron housing well advanced in stages of rust. It was also home to many Indian and Chinese shopkeepers who also served clients from Actonville by providing easy and cheap credit. The family to our left was extremely nice and kind. I wish I could say the same of the new one on our right. The relocations had now become part of our reality. It would soon be time for us to move.

I shall never forget the day we moved to Reiger Park. I was eleven years old. It was a very cold, overcast day. It even snowed a little while we were on our way to our new home. For me and my six siblings the move was exciting, albeit naively so. For my parents, it was more of a stoic acceptance of the reality they faced. On the day of the move my father, as usual, had to go to work. My mother was therefore in charge of the move. She hired a truck from our coal supplier, Express Coal, an Indian-owned business in the Old Location.

They arrived in a huge blue truck with yellow lettering which spewed thick clouds of black smoke. Our furniture was loaded onto an open flatbed truck with black smoke billowing, it pulled off and before we knew it, we were on our way to our new home – Reiger Park.

I remember us driving through the centre of the new city of Boksburg, along Leeuwpoort Street, which was very similar to Benoni's main street, Princes Avenue, with fancy, shiny shops, and pavements. On our way we passed the Boksburg Lake on the right-hand side. It reminded me of the big dam in Actonville called Shady Willows. Boksburg and Benoni had a lot in common.

Arriving in our new place

When we arrived in Reiger Park the truck stopped at a gate which became known as the 'Big Gate'. The gate served an apartheid purpose. There was a curfew in place aimed primarily at Black people. In terms of the curfew, anyone who attempted to enter the area after 21:00 was disallowed, or, if they were Black, arrested. The gate was guarded and patrolled by security guards in black uniforms.

They later became known as the 'Black Jacks' and were very controversial because of their actions against community members. Some Coloured people are of a very dark complexion and can easily be considered Black. They were often stopped from entering the township and even arrested. This happened, for instance, with my father who was very dark-skinned.

440 Ramashala Street

We arrived at our new house on 440 Ramashala Street. My siblings and I were pleasantly surprised to find our immediate neighbours were my grandmother, on my father's side, together with one of my father's sisters and her children. The neighbours to our left were also my father's family. It was really comforting moving to a new place to find our cousins, uncles, and aunts. Our new house was slightly bigger than the one we had in Actonville. It was a very well-built house with two

Front: Brenda and Henry Jeffreys. Back: Cecil and Marilyn Morden (Morden collection).

bedrooms, a decent-sized lounge, and a big kitchen. At the back, attached to the house, was a covered space like a patio. It contained an outside toilet and, as we only discovered later, a cold-water shower.

By nightfall our whole family had arrived, and we settled down, lighting candles and paraffin lamps. The talk among the adults was to look out for muti left behind by the departing Black former residents. This was a vicious rumour that people, for some reason, were taking very seriously. Ultimately, not much came of it.

Our first weekend in Reiger Park was very exciting, if somewhat worrying. There were violent clashes between local gangsters, the so-called Vikings, and a Benoni outfit called the Vultures. The conflict between these two rival gangs went on for years, leaving many gang members and innocent residents injured or dead. Over the years the groups eventually split, and the community saw the emergence of new groups of gangsters who terrorised the community. Gangsterism and escalated levels of violence continued to haunt the Reiger Park community right into the current millennium and I think its shadow remains today.

Back to school

Not long after our move it was time for us to go to school. There were three primary schools in the new township. Ironically, they were named after the three ships that brought the first Dutch settlers to the erstwhile Cape of Good Hope. My siblings and I were enrolled in the Reiger Park Primary school named after the 1652 ship De Rejiger. The other two schools were Goede Hoop and Drommedaris Primary, named after De Goede Hoop and De Dromedaris. The audacity and arrogance of the apartheid regime is sometimes laughable. They made sure we knew that we were under their rule in every facet of our lives. Even the names of our schools didn't belong to us.

Reiger Park had its own class distinctions, real or imagined, that lasted for years. The problem was that the area closest to the town centre, called Reiger Park Proper, was where people were allowed to buy and own plots to build their own houses. The housing was more than decent with electricity, running water and bathrooms with hot and cold water. The area was known as an 'economic' (read: 'wealthy') area.

It was populated by an educated and white-collared class of people who tended to look down on the rest of the community because of their perceived superior education, wealth and living conditions.

As a result, there was some controversy about Reiger Park Primary, which was apparently supposed to have been reserved for children of the elite, mostly teachers, nurses, and white-collar workers who resided in the new, upmarket area. It became so ridiculous that some people were convinced that the hair texture of certain children

was considered before they were accepted at Reiger Park Primary. Smooth hair was in, coarse hair out. If that is true, then I have no idea on what basis my siblings and I were accepted.

In 1968 I went to high school and enrolled in the new Oosrand High School, which was the old Stirtonville High School. High school was a great experience. Since Reiger Park was too young to have produced teachers from its own ranks, most of the teachers were imported from Eersterust, a Pretoria township some 70 kilometres north of Boksburg. My two favourite subjects in high school were maths and history. My two favourite teachers taught maths, Mr Charles Billings, and history, Mr WJ Filander. Maths didn't come naturally to me but Mr Billings, like all great teachers, had an ability to break down the most complex problems and make them appear simple and even easy. Mr Filander, on the other hand, just walked about with an air of enthusiasm and passion for his work. Most students find history to be a bore. He, however, made history come alive. There's not much better for a student than a teacher who cares and a teacher who's passionate about the subjects they teach.

These teachers had a profound influence on the young people of Reiger Park. There were the Wathen and the Jones brothers who taught Afrikaans, English, science, and mathematics. Mr John Wathen became the school principal and left a mark on many of the school's learners.

Later there were other teachers out of Reiger Park who had a lasting impact on many of their learners, many of whom went on to university and would no doubt credit these teachers with their progress.

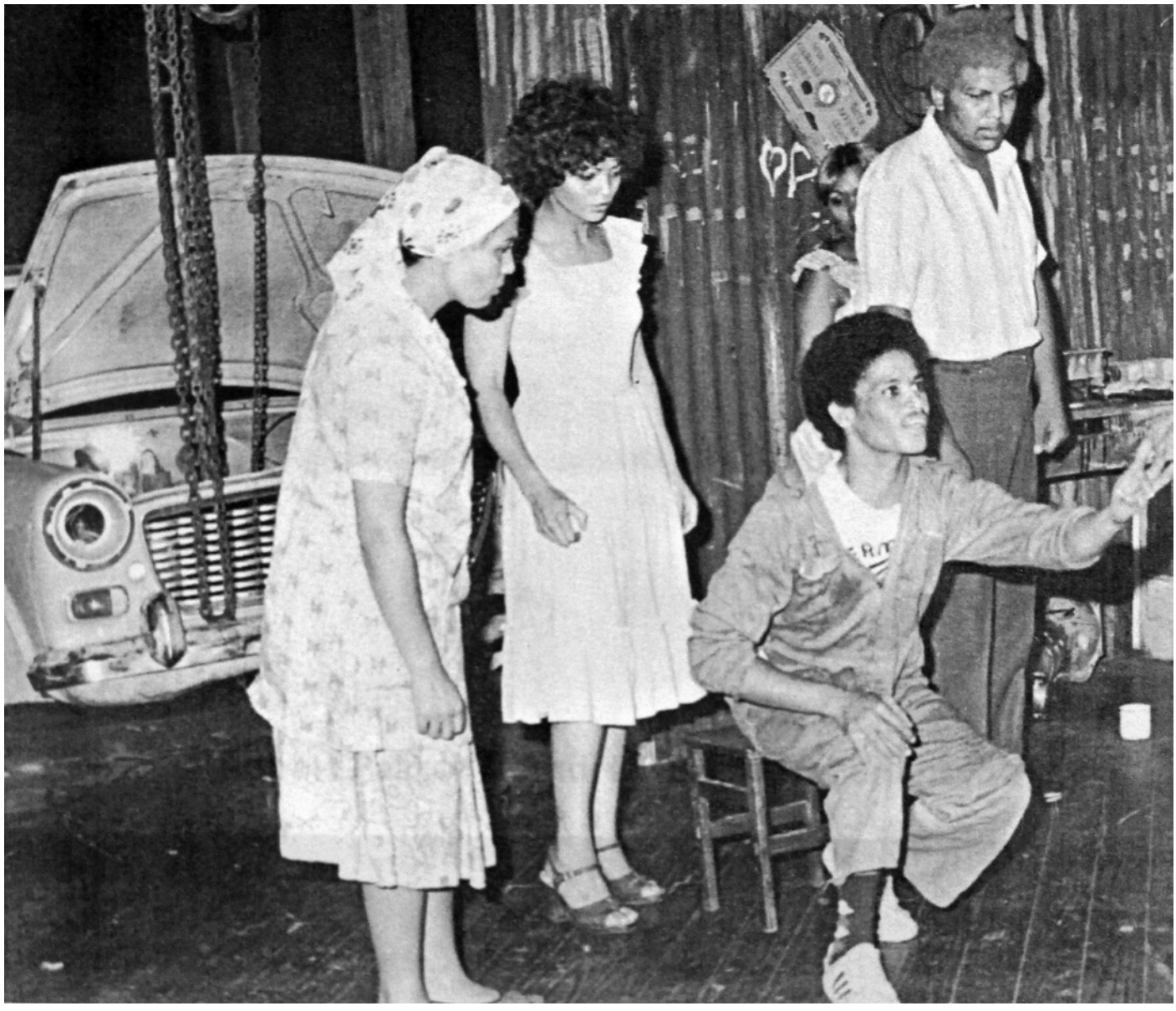
A vibrant sporting and social life

Reiger Park had a very healthy sporting life, especially football. Competition was fierce, especially between football clubs from Benoni (Orientals and Spades from Actonville) Pirates from old Stirtonville and Blackburn Rovers from Germiston. Leading soccer players were drawn from gangs, and this often led to violent conflict on and off the soccer field. These conflicts often involved partisan wives and girlfriends who smuggled weapons into the stadiums in prams and hidden on their bodies. The sport nevertheless grew and was later governed by a capable association.

The main officials included Mr James Lyons (who ran the Pirates club), Mr Dougie Anderson (Orientals) and Mr Tarzan Usher (Spades). Although I personally didn't play much sport myself, I regularly attended the Sunday League games. The first team I supported was Crusaders, an older team from Benoni. I supported them because my father once played for them as a midfielder. After they dwindled as a club, I began supporting Spades Football Club. They had some of the classiest players I'd ever seen. One of those players would become my brother-in-law, Morgan Francis. Looking back, it's sad to think of the amount of sporting talent that was lost during those years. I wouldn't have been surprised if some of those players would have made it to international stardom in another world.

Reiger Park had a bright and vibrant social life. Our people loved to dance. The community hall hosted ballroom dancing events every weekend. Bell bottoms and afros on men were the in-thing. Women loved dressing up in beautiful dresses and shoes. I wasn't much of a dancer. I did, however, attend a few popular nightclubs outside of Reiger Park.

While I did not dance, I did end up being part of a group that formed the first and only drama group in Reiger Park. The group was called the Corsair Drama Group. The story of how the group came about is a funny one. We'd just finished our last period at school on a hot summer's day and, like most students, I was ready to go home. As my group of friends walked out, we passed Principal John Wathen's office and saw him in conversation with a White man. Odd, I thought. As soon as he made eye contact with me, he yelped out "Ah! There they are!" He then called us into the office. At that point



The Corsair Drama Group in a scene from *Siener in die Suburbs* under the direction of Johan Blignaut. The actors are Brenda Weimers, Berenice Few, Henry Jeffreys, Angelique Rabie (obscured) and Fred Schubert.

confusion was rife among our group. What did we do? Were we in trouble? Mr Wathen then proceeded to explain to the White gentleman, who we later just referred to as Mr Vrey, that we were the students who had been pestering him about starting a drama group. None of us at any point had brought up drama with him! Mr Vrey seemed excited, and he mentioned how this would be a good opportunity for us to be productive and stay off the streets. To his credit, he genuinely wanted us to succeed.

After we officially formed the group, Mr Vrey introduced us to a famous White South African actress named Christine de Wet. Ms De Wet was big on Afrikaans slapstick dramas. She helped us

develop our first production called *Ma skryf matriek*. It was first performed at the Community Hall and was very well received. Ms De Wet's influence helped elevate our drama group. She introduced us to many big players within the drama industry. Our most successful production was PG du Plessis's *Siener in die Suburbs*. We got the opportunity to perform the production at the Market Theatre in Johannesburg. Performed in 1978, it was the first Afrikaans play ever to feature at the Market Theatre.

When I think back about the almost laughable way in which the Corsair Drama Group was formed, I am still dumbfounded by the heights the group reached. The impact of the group on Reiger Park was huge. The residents felt proud to be represented by the success of the Corsair Group. It is just one more example of how opportunity can breed success.

The emergence of local politics

As time passed the community became more cohesive. People coming from various communities learned to live in peace with their neighbours, and so a distinct community emerged in Reiger Park. People even developed a sense of politics. The town council of Boksburg tended to issue so-called Yellow Papers for outstanding rental money. This was followed by locking people out of their homes, a practice that was highly resented and a source of open revolt as people mobilised to march on the offices of the township manager, Mr Gerry Oberholzer, who quickly became the most hated man in Reiger Park.

The anger against Oberholzer led to protests against him and the town council, mostly by angry women. This planted the seeds for more organised forms of political action. This created space for activists such as Mr George du Plessis, Mr Simon Mentor and, of course, Mr Clarence September to start organising, but not yet in a party-political manner. At the time there were no organised political parties in Reiger Park. This only came about in 1969 when the government created the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) and arranged party political elections to elect members for this structure.

Reiger Park became a popular target for the parties contesting the elections. The main parties were the Labour Party of Mr Sonny Leon and The Federal Party of Mr Tom Swartz. This brought Mr Jac Rabie to Reiger Park, a former teacher from Potchefstroom in the old Western Transvaal. Mr Rabie, who had a charismatic personality, quickly built a significant local following.

In Reiger Park Mr September formed his own party, ironically called the National Party, complete with the orange, blue and white colours of the party that gave us apartheid. Go figure! Mr Mentor joined the Labour Party. Mr Rabie won by a large margin and moved his family to Reiger Park. A group of us befriended him and visited him often at his home. In later years we fell out because of strong political differences. He represented Reiger Park in the CRC until it was disbanded in the 1980s to make way for the even more discredited Tricameral parliament.

The 1981 uprising and the Save Boksburg Campaign

In 1981 there was an incident in Reiger Park, which was sad and disgraceful. It all started with a business family known as the Gangadins. They ran the largest taxi fleet in the township and owned several properties. One of these properties was identified to be the site for the building of new housing, for which there was a dire need in the community.

It was reported that the council had to scrap the idea for housing as the Gangadins were planning to develop the land for a shopping centre. This immediately led to protests and three days of violence against Indian businesses, including the Gangadins'. In the event, many Indian businesses were burnt to the ground and the families, including the Gangadins, were forced to flee to Benoni. The incident was nothing to be proud of. In fact, it is something we all should be ashamed of. It remains a blot on the story of Reiger Park.

The battle of Boksburg

by Guy Oliver

A peaceful protest picnic at Boksburg Lake by members of the Reiger Park community, under the auspices of the Save Boksburg Committee, resulted in racial violence as armed Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging and Conservative Party supporters clashed with the protesters on Saturday.

It was a day of tension, hallmarked by sporadic fist fights and tear smoke, with Christmas carols blaring across the lake, signifying the season, but little goodwill.

The Mayor, Clr Beyers de Klerk, who arrived at the scene armed with a baton, joining the chairman of the management comittee, Clr Gideon Fourie, the chief whip of the CP, Clr T J Ferreira and Clr Koos van der Merwe, openly mingled with gun slinging AWB supporters.

Police were present through out the day.

The SBC decided on the protest picnic at a meeting earlier in the week, following an attack on a Reiger Park church group at the lake, shortly after a CP meeting held at the Boksburg Town Hall, addressed by the leader, Andries Treurnicht.

A member of the church group, Mr Richard Carelse, who sustained internal bleeding, alleges a group of Whites assaulted the group without provocation, battering a pregnant woman and overheard one of his assailants amid the cries of frightened children suggesting they "should get it over with and shoot him."

The protest picnic erupted into violence about an hour after 100 of the protesters arrived, after some women protesters attempted to use the toilets.

A witness, Mr Andrew Nel said "A couple of Coloured women tried to use the toilet and the women in the (CP) group began to use abusive language. The Coloured women eventually left."

Following the incident, taunts between the two groups ensued and SBC member, Mr Danny Cassel alleges he was threatended by one of the AWB members.

A shocked woman bystander left in disgust when Whites "provoked the Coloured's without police intervention".

"Carols last night and a punch up today!" she exclaimed.

One member of the CP/AWB entourage sprayed tear gas at Reiger Park residents attempting to braai. This happened in full view of the police but they did not intervene or attempt to apprehend the man.

Members of the Coloured group restored the peace on several occasions.

The day broke down into violence with the two groups separated by police action through the use of tear smoke and some Reiger Park residents were arrested.

In another violent incident a White man was chased by an angry mob who kicked him and hit him with a baseball bat. The victim and a White woman were arrested.

The CP/AWB group formed a human laager and sang the national anthem, being joined by head of traffic depart-

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Chief whip of the Conservative Party caucus Clr T J Ferriera has a heated exchange with protesters at Boksburg Lake on Saturday.

Picnic, protest and fist fights during the Save Boksburg Campaign (*Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 1989).

In the late 1980s a Whites-only local election brought the right-wing Conservative Party of Dr Andries Treurnicht to power in the Boksburg Town Council. The party promptly proceeded to reintroduce what was known as 'petty apartheid' in the town. This meant that apartheid measures, such as Whites only public toilets, park benches and other public amenities, which were scrapped by a slowly reforming National Party, were reintroduced by the Boksburg Town Council.

The response of the Reiger Park community was swift. A public meeting was convened in the community hall and was attended by hundreds of upset residents. It was decided to fight the new measures by means of an economic boycott of White businesses in Boksburg. Most of these businesses depended on trade from Reiger Park. A committee under the chairmanship of advocate Mahomed Navsa was formed. The campaign was dubbed the Save Boksburg Campaign.

The group organising the campaign became known as the Save Boksburg Committee. I have vivid memories of the sense of activism it brought about in the community. The initiatives undertaken by the committee in opposition to the apartheid government quickly became a source of cohesion in Reiger Park. One of the main guiding principles

of the campaign was that it had to be a non-violent form of protest that still placed immense pressure for reform on the town council. It was a huge success and crippled businesses in the town of Boksburg. For a year Reiger Park consumers were bused to neighbouring Benoni to do their shopping, in an ironic turn of the wheel.

The committee held monthly report-back meetings to keep the community abreast of developments and to account for its actions. Some of the top national leaders, including the likes of Dr Allan Boesak; the UDF leader, Trevor Manuel; the leader of the Cape Professional Teachers' Association, Mr Franklin Sonn; and the Roman Catholic Archbishop Dennis Hurley of Durban, among others, were invited as speakers to several of these meetings.

After the consumer boycott ended the Save Boksburg Committee continued with various community- based initiatives for another two years. This three-year period was a long time to sustain a campaign like this and the list of speakers was designed to keep the community interested and inspired. It worked. All the meetings over the period were well attended, especially after Dr Boesak, at one meeting, informed the audience that the campaign was noted with approval by Nelson Mandela, then still imprisoned.

The new South Africa

Following the Save Boksburg Campaign the attention shifted quickly to the new politics. The first democratic election was on the cards. Because of the Save Boksburg Campaign, Reiger Park was on the radar screens of political parties, especially the ANC. It was taken for granted that, because of the economic boycott, the township would align itself with the African National Congress.

This, however, proved to be easier said than done. Reiger Park became an uphill battle for the ANC after 1994. The majority of the township's voters eventually sided with 'established' opposition parties. This was a major disappointment for especially the younger activists. It just goes to show that voters should never be taken for granted.

The Reiger Park of today is almost completely unrecognisable from the time of its creation. It changed with the country. It has numerous new areas consisting of sprawling informal settlements. It is nothing like what the inventors of apartheid had in mind. It is a tough place with huge challenges in providing housing, schooling, and creating a better life and wealth for all its people. Despite the challenges Reiger Park has faced over the years, the resilience of the community remains. As for me, I may have physically moved away from Reiger Park, but my affection for Reiger Park will always remain.

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The life stories of Japie and Paul Lapoorta

Japie Lapoorta

Japie and Paul Lapoorta were both born in the then Germiston Location called Dukathole, Japie on 15 May 1954 and Paul 18 months later, on 12 November 1955. They both attended the Germiston Secondary School up to Grade 7. Memories are all they have of the brutal instruction that they had to leave Germiston to go to Stirtonville, later called Reiger Park. Black people were evicted to resettle in Vosloorus. Japie went on to attend the Oosrand High School in Reiger Park where he attempted to complete Grade 8 for three years in succession but was unable due to various circumstances.

Their parents divorced when Japie was eight, Paul seven and their sister Judy five. According to the divorce agreement the two boys were placed in the custody of their paternal grandmother and their sister with their maternal grandmother. While they stayed with their grandmother, the brothers attended the Apostolic Faith Mission Church where their grandmother was a member. They remember how they went to church, passing the Turton Community Hall where people normally hosted dance functions. The dances started after people passed en route to church, but the church was often dismissed after the functions were over. It was in this church where some fundamental principles were laid down in their lives, including the principles of worship, service, respect, and a work ethic. The AFM dictum of "No Crown without a Cross" and the symbols thereof were etched in their minds since childhood.

People who made lasting impressions on them were aunties Siesie (Fox) Jacobs, Eileen Thomas, Peggy de Lange, Lotte Kraai, Meide MacDonald, Roseline Morden, and Titty Varrie, and uncles Ebrahim Khan, Abraham Morden, James Varrie, Prusy Gordon, Johnny Thomas, Boss Jacobs, Debbo Rylands, and Martin Allies, their beloved Sunday School teacher.

In 1969 both sets of grandparents agreed that they were growing old and needed to find a stable environment where their grandchildren could grow up. Because of this, they approached Child Welfare, who intervened by taking the children away

from both sets of grandparents and placing them in custody at the Witwatersrand Place of Safety and Detention in Apex, Benoni. This happened during January of that year but towards the end of February they were told that they would be moving to an orphanage in the Cape. It turned out to be the Dutch Reformed Mission Church orphanage in Pofadder, a place situated 55 km from the nearest train station where the tarred road stopped right at the station. It was 135 km from Upington, the largest town in the vicinity northwards, and 115 km southwards from Bitterfontein, the nearest train station on the way to Cape Town. All roads leading to the train stations were dirt roads severely corrugated because of the heavy traffic they carried.

In Pofadder they attended the François Visser School that ended at Standard 6 and thereafter they had to find work in the town. They remained in the orphanage but paid boarding and lodging. Japie went on to work at the post office after completing Standard 6 and Paul at one of the garages as a petrol attendant. Their sister, who was in Standard 3, was demoted to Standard 1, which meant she was going to stay there longer to finish her schooling. After about two years in this facility the brothers were frustrated, and Japie had trouble with the authorities at the orphanage and in town. He was arrested and the orphanage planned to send both boys to a reformatory in Cape Town.

In 1971 they were transferred to the Faure School for Boys in Faure, Cape Town. This separation between the brothers and their sister was painful and long. It ended in 1975 when Japie as a student participated in an evangelistic campaign in Springbok, Namaqualand. When the people advertised the services over the loudspeaker, Judy heard his name and asked to see him. She was brought to him, and their reunion was amazing.

In Faure they both excelled in sports. Paul became the top 100 and 200 metre athlete and topped the list of boys from all the reformatories in Cape Town. Japie became a long-distance athlete and played rugby

The Lapoortas, c.1968: Japie, Judy and Paul with their father, Jafta (Lapoorta collection).

for the first team as a flank. Although he did well in running, he did not pursue it beyond his stay. In rugby he played for the school against well-known teams on the City and Suburban grounds in Athlone. They excelled and became head boys to over 300 boys each at the school. They also learned trades, Japie carpentry and Paul bricklaying and plastering. They completed Standard 8 before they left the facility.

In 1972 Japie accepted the Lord as his Saviour while being at the school. When he heard the voice of somebody calling him by name and stating his life

and the situations in which he could be killed, he made an appointment with one of the psychologists at the school. When Japie related the incident to him, the psychologist said he thought the Lord was calling Japie into ministry and made an appointment with his pastor to see Japie. The psychologist's pastor happened to be the AFM Pastor of Maitland Assembly. After hearing the story about Japie's experience, he came to the same conclusion and offered to pay all the costs for his studies once he was released from the Faure School. Paul also accepted the Lord as his Saviour in 1973. Paul was released from the school to enrol at the Athlone Trade College and one of his instructors, Mr 'Kwas' Erasmus, agreed to give him boarding and lodging at his house in Wynberg.

Paul left the school in 1973 and Japie was released in 1974. He went straight to the Sarepta Theological College where he began his studies in theology. It was here that Japie realised the need for further studies, and he and Paul both enrolled for Standard 10. Paul studied through Lyceum and Japie attended night school in Bellville South under the leadership of Mr Tony Links. During the day Paul did his practicals on the building in Wynberg while Japie attended Sarepta Theological College, and at night they studied. Paul completed Standard 10 and Japie successfully completed three subjects. The next year the workload at Sarepta increased, which made it impossible for Japie to complete Standard 10 that year and he had to postpone it until 1978.

After the completion of his Theological training Japie requested to go back to Pofadder. The Board of Curators did not accede to his request, because there was no AFM assembly and he had to do probation under an ordained AFM pastor. In 1976 he was placed at Kakamas to plant a church with twelve members. This was incidentally the same year Paul felt called to the ministry; he left the building industry and enrolled at the Sarepta Theological College. When the Maitland Assembly heard about it, they also paid the cost of his studies.

Japie and the twelve members planted the church and erected a building with the assistance of an American Church organised by Pastor Justus du Plessis and the help of Pastor CJ Kotze. Hereafter Japie received a call to Upington, from where he was later called to be a lecturer at the Sarepta Theological College and later became the principal. It was during this time that he was elected as General Secretary of the then Coloured Church and proceeded to become the Moderator of the church with Paul as General Secretary. They held these positions until the unification of the Black AFM churches, called the 'Composite Division', and the White Church, which was called the 'Single Division', was requested in 1993. Paul still served on the National Executive in his capacity as Regional Chairperson of the Western Cape, while Japie was elected to be the Deputy President of the 'Composite Division'. The struggle for the unity of the AFM Church continued with both Japie and Paul playing important roles. In 1996 the process of the Composite and Single Divisions was completed and the Unitary AFM of SA was formed. Japie was elected as National Youth Leader and in 1999 he was elected Deputy President, a position he still holds.

Japie got married on 31 December 1977 to Susan Visagie, a professional nurse, and they have five children. Their three eldest daughters Althea, Susan and Jacqueline are chartered accountants. Their son Shelton completed his three-year training at the Stellenbosch Rugby Academy as a coach and high-performance player. He plays for the Roses United Rugby Club in Wellington. Their fifth child is their daughter Gracia, whom they lost when she was 18 months old and who would have been 32 in 2020.

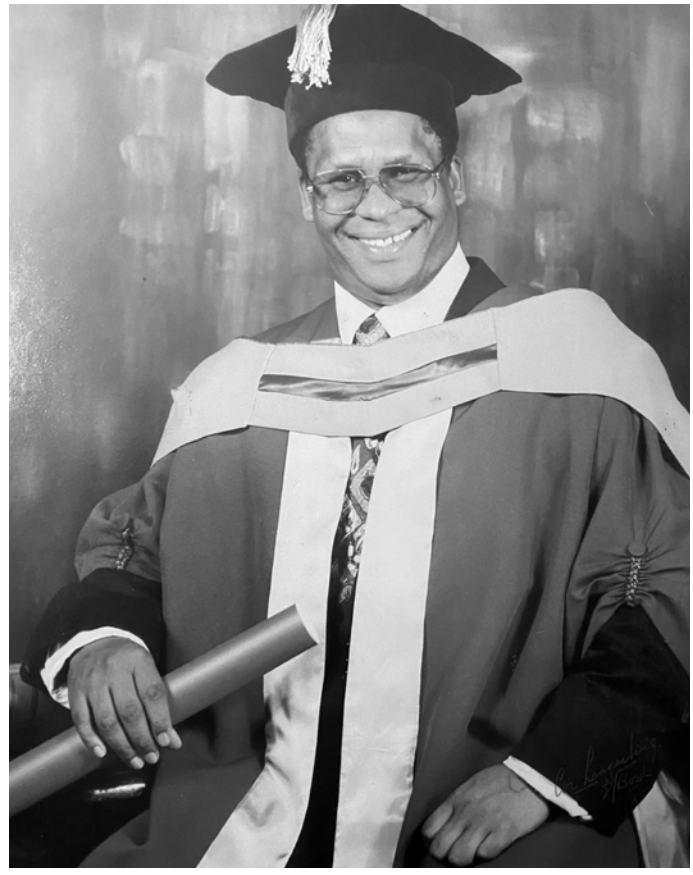
Paul completed his Theological studies in 1978. He was placed in the Durbanville Assembly as presiding pastor under the supervision of Pastor John Johnson. After ordination he accepted a call to the Elsies River Glad Tiding Assembly in Halt Road, and from there he accepted a call to the Matroosfontein Assembly where Pastor Ebrahim

Khan was also a presiding pastor. Paul married Moira Delport on 25 September 1982. They have two children, Theodore and Athaliah.

Since both Japie and Paul completed matric, they applied to the University of South Africa in 1980 to study towards bachelor degrees. Japie applied for the bachelor's in Theology and Paul for the bachelor's in Social Work. Both were accepted and began their studies while in ministry. In the first year they passed all modules. It was then that Paul decided to change courses because the effects of the practical assignments for Social Work and Psychology became too much in addition to his assembly work. Paul diverted his degree to a bachelor with Biblical Studies and Sociology as majors. In 1984 they were both awarded their bachelor's degrees in the Parow Civic Centre. Thereafter both continued with their honours degrees. Japie studied Systematic Theology and Paul in Biblical Studies, and the degrees were awarded in 1986. Still, the end to their academic pursuits were not in sight. They wanted to do research and continued with MA studies.

Since the University of the Western Cape only offered master's studies by thesis, they approached the University of Cape Town where they could do their MA by course work. They were tentatively accepted, and scholarships were offered. Paul told Japie that he was considering enrolling at Stellenbosch. Japie, however, was adamant to stay with the University of Cape Town. Japie enrolled at the University of Cape Town and Paul at Stellenbosch University. Both graduated, Japie in 1988, and Paul in 1989. In 1991 both decided to apply for entrance to the doctoral degree in Theology at the University of the Western Cape.

A prerequisite to being accepted was them doing seven oral examinations, four in the major subject of study, two in auxiliary fields and a final impromptu examination before the whole Faculty of Theology, where they could be asked any question in the theological field. These examinations were based on a prescribed book of up to 2 000 pages that the students had to read, analyse, interpret, and summarise. Both passed these examinations and were allowed to proceed with the writing of a proposal and thereafter their theses. Paul's promotor, Prof Gustav Bam, died in the year he completed his oral examinations, and a new promoter was assigned to him. Paul decided to switch to the University of South Africa, while Japie continued at the University of the Western Cape. Japie was awarded his Doctoral degree in Theology in 1996 and Paul went on to complete his Doctoral degree in Theology in 2003 at the University of South Africa.



Japie Lapoorta received his Doctoral degree in Theology at the University of the Western Cape in 1996 (Lapoorta collection).

2020

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My joys, struggles and sacrifices in Reiger Park

Ambrose E du Plessis

I was born in Benoni location in a section then known as the 'Cape Section' in March 1951. This section was comprised of only six and a half streets, running parallel from First to Sixth Street. The location went further up to 21st Street. Black people occupied most of the other streets, while Indian people occupied the far west side of the location. A railway line divided the location and Wattville.

We all stayed with my grandparents, John and Euphemia du Plessis, in Third Street: my sister Adelaide, my mother Lilian (née Meyer), my father Veril, my two uncles George and Sydney and an aunt, Pearl. Euphemia (née Morton) was my grandfather's second wife. His first wife was Maggie (née De Lille). Euphemia was the mother of George and Pearl. Maggie was my father's and Sydney's mother.

The house consisted of a lounge *(voorhuis)*, three bedrooms and a kitchen. The lavatory *(die kleinhuisie)* was in the backyard, close to the street. Two years later another brother Randolph was added to the family. In 1956 my father bought a stand on Fifth Street on which he built our new house. Our new house had the same facilities as that of my grandparents, with the addition of a non-functional bathroom. By 1959 two additional brothers, Howard and Ulick, were added to the family. This dusty street, Fifth Street, only had ten houses, six on our side of the street and four on the other side. The people who lived in this short street were quite 'mixed': Coloureds, Ghoentas, Muslims and Indians.[1] I consequently grew up with friends from diverse backgrounds.

Only the mainstream churches could be found here, namely the Catholic Church by the circle, the Anglican Church in Third Street and the Ebenezer Church in Second Street as well as the Methodist, Lutheran, AFM and Dutch Reformed Churches. There were no charismatic denominations, commonly referred to as 'Happy Clappers' or one-man shows.

The shops in this section were owned by Coloured taxi-owners (the Oppermans, Clements and De Jagers), which in turn let them to Chinese and Indian shopkeepers. Across this part of the location, on the main road, First Street, were a few

The Du Plessis family: Ambrose, Lilian, Randolph, Veril and Adelaide (Du Plessis collection).

Jewish-owned stores: a posh outfitters, a surgery and dentist, a butcher, and a hardware store. Next to the hardware store was the Council's Bantu beer plant and beer hall. Then there was the Davey Social Centre, our Civic Hall, and the local clinic. My grandmother and nurse Putini were in charge of the clinic. Next to the clinic was the local Council rent office. On the very last block of this row was a hostel for migrant workers. A soccer field was located between the Primary School and William Hills High School, in Third Street. Here we watched soccer matches on Saturday afternoons; at the time there were about four local soccer teams.

Benoni Coloured Primary School (from Sub A to Standard 5) consisted of four rows of black wooden classrooms. Part of the school accommodated the Indian Primary School. My first two years at school were the finest years of my entire school life. Here I was introduced to a new world of clay, crayons and slates but best of all was the treats we got at school: 1/4 pint of milk three times a week, sliced cheese, fruit, bread and soup.

The highlight of the week was when we could watch documentary films (with a 16 mm projector) once a week, mostly educational. For us it was like going to the bioscope for free. Our years of

Veril and Sydney 'Rice' du Plessis (Du Plessis collection).

writing with a pencil ended when we progressed to Standard 1 where we were introduced to nib and ink (and *kladpapier* or blotting paper) and to cursive writing. Also, there were no more *kleiosse*, clay oxen.

We only had one teacher for all our subjects, except in Standard 5 where at the end of the week the last two periods would be set aside for *Handwerk.* Here I learnt to make a wooden rabbit, mounted on a wooden base, with wooden wheels, and when it was drawn forward it did a little hop. At primary school we were moulded: tables, reading books from the local library, Meccano sets, and athletics. The school was divided into four sports teams (houses). After a period of intensive training, which seemed to go on forever and ever, we had our yearly athletic outing across the railway line at Wattville Stadium. Here the athletes of the four houses would compete against each other in running, high jump, long jump, etc. This was a special outing. Most of our mothers would attend, even those working would take the day off. They all packed picnic baskets for the occasion. We also had the Boys Brigade and the drum majorettes with flags. On this day, every child had to be adorned in her/his house's colours, or else…! We each had to wear a rosette.

After having passed Standard 5 we could walk

across our local soccer field, across Third Street, one of the few tarred roads, into the gates of William Hills High School. For me the school was a totally new world. It was a 'mixed school' for Coloured and Indian pupils, the former mostly Afrikaans speaking and the latter English speaking. Our teachers were also a combination of Coloured and Indian. Unlike in the primary school where we sat in one classroom all day, here we had to move from one classroom to another as we changed subjects or periods. No more ink and nib, but ballpoints. Hip hip hooray for this! In came Parker pens and the works.

I was introduced to science and drawings during woodwork classes. We were under the Transvaal Education Department (TED), which followed a stream system: 'A' for university entrance, 'B' for entry into a college and 'C' for the 'working class'. This was really another world, which was unlike my primary education when we had time after school for things like collecting bottles, pieces of steel, sacks of bones and bottles to be sold to the Bagla, the local scrapyard. We received as little as 11/6 (15 cents) which we spent on going to the bioscope, a two-penny achaar bread, etc. which made me tremendously happy at the time. Following our first exams after six months in Standard 6 I made it into the 'A' stream and thought I was now set for life, maybe to become a medical doctor.

In retrospect our primary school teachers who taught us to the best of their abilities seemed to have concentrated on developing our skills in the areas of sport, arts, and outings to the cinema, to watch *My Fair Lady* or to go to the planetarium and the FM Tower during my Standard 3 year. They were dedicated tutors who tried against all the odds to mould us for our future. God bless them all. Then came 'separate development': Coloured, Indian and Black people were to be housed in different areas and attend separate schools, tearing our lives to pieces. A new era awaited me. Over the years our parents had to submit and endure in order to be able to provide for us, but now we also had to submit and face an uncertain future. I had one Indian, three Black and quite a few Coloured friends. We grew up together but now some of these relationships would be destroyed forever.

During 1965 I had to leave a life that I knew and was content with, a *kasie* where we lived more or less side by side, a life where I acted in a concert, learnt to interact across racial lines of which I was not even aware of at the time, and lived peacefully with others. We moved to Reiger Park, as part of an experiment by the authorities, and it was traumatic. The gang violence was most upsetting. However, we survived this disruption in our lives and managed to make the most of it. Our spirits were never broken. This was also a time I began to struggle with whether I should continue to think and express myself in Afrikaans or rather in English in order just to understand and make sense of what was going on.

My high school life was spent at three schools. I did Standards 6 and 7 at William Hills High, up to 1965. I transferred to Germiston in 1966 to do Standard 8. The reason for this was that my sister became unhappy with certain teachers at William Hills High, so I joined her at the Germiston Coloured School, which only went up to Standard 8. Oosrand High School opened in 1967 and we were the first group of Standard 9 pupils at this school. There were about 20 of us. The building used by the 'new school' was at first a school for Black pupils in Stirtonville which they vacated when they had to move to Vosloorus in 1964. All the Coloured pupils still at William Hills High had to transfer to Oosrand High in 1967. William Hills High now became a school for Indian children only. The next year, 1968, sadly only 10 of the 20 Standard 9 pupils started matric at Oosrand High, two girls and eight boys. I was elected as the first head boy of the school, even though I was the smallest in the class. Mr Max Felix was our principal.

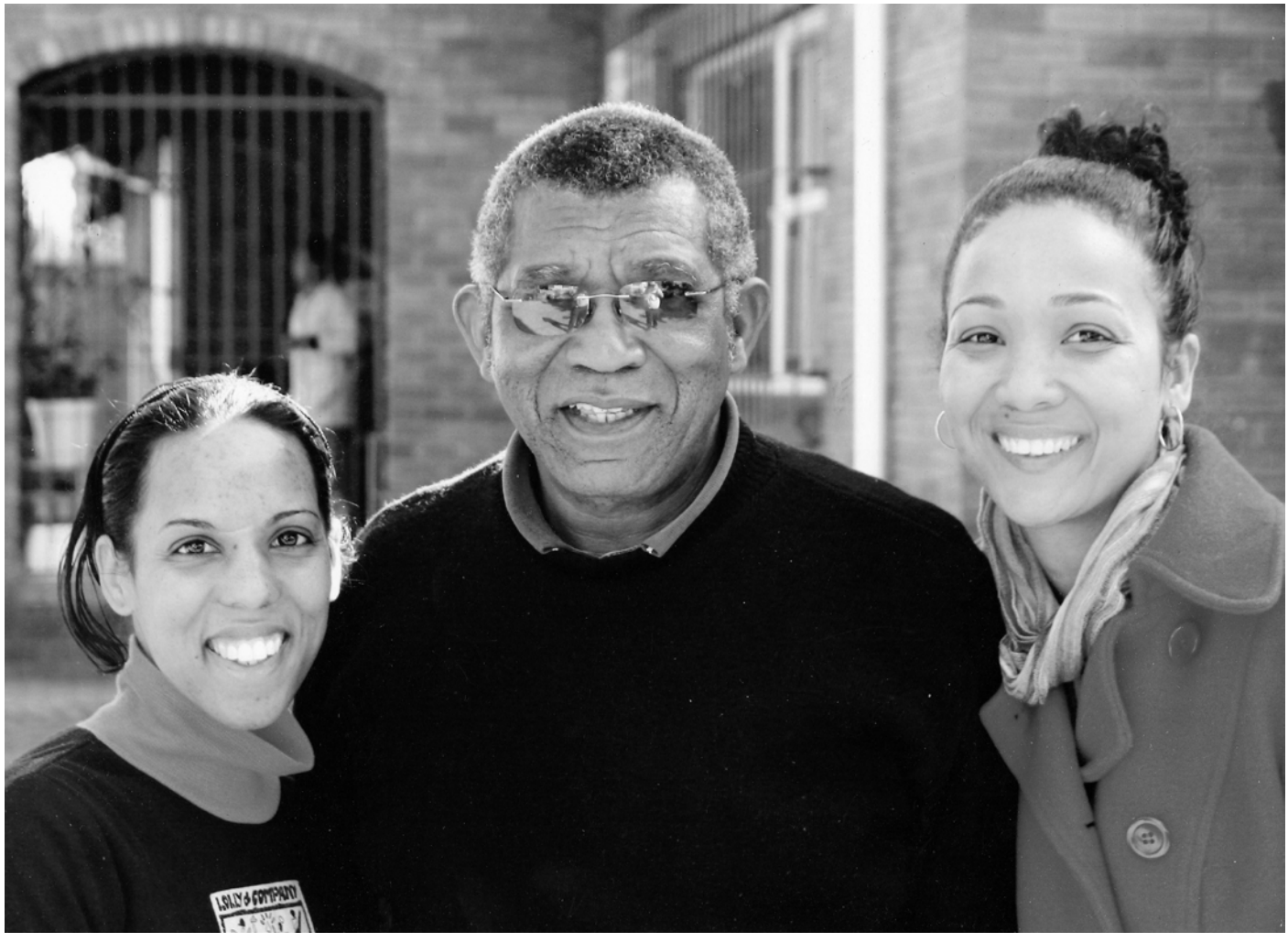
The move to Reiger Park in 1965 as a result of the implementation of the Group Areas Act was against the wishes of most residents, but we had no real choice. I would have preferred to remain in Benoni. On the other hand, Reiger Park presented advantages to some residents. In our case we had a much bigger yard and a toilet in the house, no more 'outside *balies*' (buckets). I made a lot of new friends. We moved into an area called Reiger Park (Extension 1) where the new residents could build their own houses. Immediately next to this area was a depot for garbage trucks and a small maize field. Then there was Galeview (council houses constructed of concrete), Stirtonville, the Doubles and the Singles. Next to the Singles one could still see the stables for horses. Later the flats were built in this area. At one of the entrances to Reiger Park was an area called Kalamazoo which dated from the early 1900s. My wife and soulmate Patricia was born here in 1948. Her father was from Indian descent and her mother hailed from St Helena. Later Patricia attended the Indian English-medium primary school in Stirtonville where Mr Saldanha was the principal. Some of the Black residents of Stirtonville used horse-drawn carts (trolleys) to sell wood and coal. A man in the community called 'Oom Ben' (Van Ross) made use of these facilities when more Coloured people moved to Stirtonville/Reiger Park. He also sold wood from a trolley. Near Cinderella dam, De Wet, a White man, owned a small holding where he farmed with sheep and the like.

With the establishment of Reiger Park, Coloured people were relocated from different places such as Benoni, Germiston, and as far afield as Herschel in the Transkei. Over time a number of people from other areas across the country also moved to Reiger Park. It took years for the people of Reiger Park to come to know one another, because of a sort of reluctance based on fear, distrust, and concern about the safety of your family. The prevalence of gangsters during the area's formative years also created a level of uncertainty in the community. The development of Reiger Park as a community took a very long time.

During the late 1950s I came to know of the African National Congress at my grandmother's house in Third Street, where some political debates occurred. I remember Oliver Tambo from Wattville selling a local ANC newspaper while visiting my uncle George. Tambo was still at school. This newspaper was clandestine stuff. Aunty Mary Moodley and her two sons were also regular visitors. She later received three consecutive five-year banning orders.

I also remember the celebrations around Republic Day in 1961. I was still at primary school and on 30 May we all received miniature South African flags and bronze medals with the new Republic of South Africa insignia on it. We had to wave these flags during assembly on 30 May and were told that the following day would be a public holiday.

However, serious political debates were rather limited during the early 1960s. It became more prevalent with the elections for the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) in the late 1960s. The political parties that contested these elections were the anti-apartheid Labour Party, the pro-apartheid National Party and the Federal Party. During the late 1960s I got involved with the Labour Party. During the first elections for the CRC an incident happened at the Ebenezer Church. Johnny Issel (Jaybaai) joined Kevin Ehrenreich and me to derail Mr Clarence September's election campaign. At Reiger Park Primary we used a classroom to draft a multipoint pamphlet pointing out to the people of Reiger Park why Seppie who was the candidate for the pro-apartheid Coloured National Party was unfit to represent them in this circus parliament. We used an outdated copy machine *(afrolmasjien)*, a box with a screen, ink and a roller to make copies, one at a time. I also sketched Seppie's face on a stencil. These two pages were copied in the classroom. By 03:00 in the morning we started distributing pamphlets to



Genevieve (left) and Therese (right) with their father Ambrose du Plessis (Du Plessis collection).

every household in Reiger Park, and also set some of Seppie's campaign posters alight. Mazibuko Street, now Clarence September Street, looked like Commissioner Street in Johannesburg lit up during Christmas time. This was probably the nail in Seppie's coffin. His political career was short-lived.

I also went with my uncle Simon Mentor, my mother's brother, to Kimberley for the inauguration of the National Labour Party Youth Congress. Nominations for the chairmanship ended up between Achmat Dangor from Fordsburg and I. I declined, because of previous visits by the Special Branch. Achmat became the National Chairperson of the Youth Wing of the Labour Party, but a few months later he was slapped with a five-year house arrest. The other local politicians were Jac Rabie of the Federal party and Simon Mentor of the Labour Party. This was a time when we generally distrusted one another. It was the only defence against betrayal.

On the sports front soccer clubs such as Pixies, Callies, Arabians, Pirates and Spades entertained us over weekends. Simon Wangra started two rugby teams in Reiger Park, A and B teams. They competed with teams from Johannesburg on the only rugby field, the ERPM stadium, next to the mine hostels,

i.e., the *kampong*, in the area occupied by informal settlers now referred to as Joe Slovo. A few tennis players could be found on our tennis courts (which were unfortunately later demolished), including oom Tolla, Mr Petrus Hendriks, who passed away in his mid-90's in 2021, and Soobhan Brooks.

At the beginning the arts were almost non-existent in Reiger Park. Here and there someone attempted to start a drama group, however, most such attempts died prematurely. Reiger Park had no library at the time. We supported Jaybaai during this time to pressure the Council for a public library. Initially public transport to the nearest railway station, town and the surrounding industrial areas was mostly provided by the Council's buses. It was only later that taxis became the dominant means of local public transport.

We started the Young Catholic Workers (YCW) with me as chairman during the early 1970s. The objectives were to involve the youth with activities such as table tennis and debates, and to change their outlook on life for the better. I was also involved with the East Rand Alumni Society later, which started with building the preschool. Later I joined forces with Father Stan and was Chairman of the Board of St Anthony's Day Care Centre for the Aged for twelve years. When my wife became manager of this Centre I had to step down as chairperson to avoid any potential conflict of interest. I then became involved in other projects located outside Reiger Park, still serving the people of Reiger Park but now also the broader community, such as Mercy Haven for abused women and children, and the Board of the House of Mercy, a rehabilitation centre.

The role of the Catholic Church and Father Stan could best be understood if you knew him, his vision, courage and determination to help Reiger Park. When he was appointed as Parish priest in 1963-64 the Catholic Church was very small. During his visits to his parishioners while driving his bakkie he saw and realised the needs of the community in all spheres, be it spiritual, educational, cultural and recreational, the works.

He started a night school to help improve the level of education, starting with teachers, those with only Standard 8, encouraging them to do their matric. A library was also established on the church premises. The lack of technical skills in the community encouraged him to establish a Skills Training Centre, to focus on skills training for motor mechanics, electricians and welders. He observed how some of the aged were being neglected by their own children, hence the Day Care Centre for the Aged, which went from once-a-week tea and sandwiches to a fully fledged centre. His concern about alcohol and drug abuse led to the establishment of the House of Mercy Rehabilitation Centre. When Aids became a major problem, Father Stan initiated the establishment of the St Francis Care Centre.

Father Stan emphasised that these facilities were meant to uplift and assist the broader Reiger Park community and not only members of the Catholic Church. In the end he was disappointed that the community of Reiger Park did not make use of these facilities to the extent that he had hoped they would, but was encouraged that many people from outside Reiger Park did make extensive use of all these facilities.

Gangsterism has been a perennial problem in Reiger Park and some of my distant family members were affected by it, but not my immediate family. To address this problem one needs to start at the root, the family being the core cell of every society. One cancerous cell within society could later infect the whole society slowly, if not stopped at an earlier stage. It is what we put into the mind of the child from birth to become a respectable person in future that makes a difference: the morals, the values,the ability to be able to distinguish between right and wrong

and to take responsibility. At times one would think that one is fighting a losing battle or losing a fighting battle. Many people have tried in the past, from every angle – religious and from all other spheres in life – but to no avail. No one seems to be able to solve this problem as despondency prevails. *Dit het handuit geruk*. What would one leave to posterity? Not much, as it would seem at times.

I matriculated in 1968 with a 'B' level; the following year I rewrote matric (with Johnny Issel) for an A-pass. This was also the time of the transition from TED to Coloured Affairs. In 1970 I went to the University of the Western Cape to further my studies. I wanted to become an Anglican priest, but things did not work out for me. Later that year I discontinued my studies and started to work for Lennon Druggist as a storeman, now known as a warehouse manager. I later moved on to Propan Pharm in Johannesburg, working in their accounts department. I also enrolled with Unisa for a BA degree. Fortunately (or unfortunately) it was during this time that I met my future wife, which led to a dramatic change in my personal life. Having realised that my fiancée would never convert to become an Anglican, I converted to Catholicism. We got married in 1977.

I worked at quite a number of places over the years, e.g. Plascon Paints and Atlas Aircraft. At Atlas I came to find out what job reservation was all about. The White people said that you were a valuable worker, but a White person with a lesser education would get a higher increment than you. This triggered my resignation. The second time this happened to me was when I worked as a warehouse manager at Joshua Doore in Springs. After four years in the position they decided to computerise their business. I was subsequently asked to step aside and to work with a regional manager as this branch was used as the satellite branch to launch this transition. Management later hired a White person to take over this position. Needless to say he had no knowledge or capabilities for this task. After seeing his payslip, incidentally, I noticed that he was earning four times more than what I was earning at the time. Hurt, for the second time, I resigned. Incidents like these, discrimination on the basis of the colour of your skin, hurt not just your feelings but your soul.

I found a managerial position at KIC IND. During this time it became clear that change in South Africa was now inevitable, that the writing was on the wall. KIC IND attempted to sell their products back to their supplier, a Japanese aircon business, as all major building projects stopped. I then applied for a position at Pick n Pay, the supermarket chain, and for the next 21 years worked at this company, at first running their back store and later their own warehouse. In the early years at Pick n Pay I still noticed remuneration differences, but by now it made no difference to me, as I came to accept that somewhere there was an unwritten law that a White person must earn more than a person of colour. I retired in 2011.

My wife Patricia and I have four daughters, all schooled at St Dominic's, which resulted in years of struggle and sacrifice. Thereafter they all studied what they deemed to be their interests in life. The eldest, Therese (Tez), became a graphic designer, Genevieve and Dominique interior designers and the baby, Danielle, went to culinary school and obtained three chef diplomas, although she is not a practising chef. They all did stints overseas as *au pairs*, which led to three of them getting married to men from abroad. The eldest, her husband and three children live in Ireland, the two middle ones married US citizens, one living in Washington DC and the other in St Louis and later in Chicago. Danielle is still at home.

The Catholic tradition of the corporal works of mercy became the driving force in my life. It is better to serve than to be served; one

needs not always be compensated for your deeds; don't do good deeds for glorification, riches or status, or it might be seen as though you want to buy your way into heaven, which is simply impossible. Apart from serving as chairman of several outreach programmes within Reiger Park and surrounding areas, when I retired in 2011 I kept on helping at the Day Care Centre by assisting the driver. This involved picking up out-patients (from afar) for the driver to take them to hospital and helping in every which way I can. In 2018 all the drivers retired from the centre, so I took over the responsibility of taking out-patients to hospital and to deliver their medication on a weekly basis. At times I assist with distributing food parcels and collecting pensions for those that are too sick to do it themselves.

I am currently doing charcoal sketches of the old Oosrand High School. Decorating the Church to coincide with the different seasons within the Church calendar also keeps me busy. Over the years I have painted many portraits, both acrylic and oil, for the local church and the one in Dawn Park. I am healthy, happy and humbled to be still involved in various aspects of the Reiger Park community.

There is always more than one angle to look at things in life. All things are twofold, one opposite the other. He has made nothing incomplete, one confirms the good things of the other (Sirach 42: 24-25). One should take care to remain objective, or otherwise be consumed by subjectivity. Take for instance the revolt of 1981. It was primarily a taxi feud which could have been resolved by the two parties involved. One side was corrupt and the other was robbed of their fair share of the cake. The feud could have been resolved amicably but then the community ran amok. A large number of the community was drawn in, most of them not knowing or understanding what was really going on. They just joined in, so much so that it could have been perceived to look like a racial war between Coloured and Indian people. The result was the looting of shops and the burning of most Indian shops. The shopkeepers found themselves at the wrong place and wrong time. The events were a total exposure of the bad elements among us. Nevertheless, out of the ashes bloom some white flowers. This event changed a lot of scenarios in Reiger Park. Those who were formerly excluded from business found a new purpose or direction to enter business like operating taxis; other opportunities were also emerging.

Towards the end of 1989 the community decided to take a stand against the *verkrampte* White right-wing Town Council and stood united to boycott the businesses in town. Buses were mobilised to ferry consumers to take their buying power to neighbouring towns like Benoni. The result was that during this period the centre of Boksburg became a 'ghost town'. The consumer boycott was successful because once again the people became one.

The ERPM mine surrounding Reiger Park, impacted developments in Reiger Park with all its mining and other activities. We had two mining compounds (hostels) housing migrant workers in close vicinity, one on the north-western side, but virtually part of Reiger Park, and one on the eastern side, in the direction of the centre of town close to the White suburb of Parkdene. Kalamazoo to the north, in the direction of East Rand Station, was slowly emptying as the Indian residents were moved to Benoni. However, for many years to come there remained a few Indian shops and one Chinese shop, Ah Tong, in this area. These shops did good business with the migrant hostel dwellers and the people of Reiger Park. They catered for most of our immediate needs, and at times there was no need to go shopping in town. This was the time of *tiekie line*, which meant we could buy loose stuff in small quantities for a *tiekie* or a six-pence, such as mealie meal, tomatoes, potatoes, or even 'loose' cooking oil. Some of the migrant workers did domestic chores such as gardening and sometimes house cleaning at the houses in Reiger Park. Then there was fafi, an

illegal gambling game, which was run by Ah Tong with a few people from Reiger Park as agents.

Reiger Park seems to be a community in disarray, disorder and confusion. It seems at times that no one heeds to anything or nothing, to anybody, nobody or somebody. It is a sad situation. Our so-called leaders or philanthropists, or whatever one would like to call them, do not really exist like in the olden days. It seems we all went our different ways. The moral fibre or our society is being ripped to pieces, in front of our eyes. Those sitting on corners in circles with a hookah pipe seem ignorant that they are acting in a self-destructive way. Our spiritual leaders appear to be in a state of despair. Respect for the rule of law and for each other is not what it should be. Those that really and truly care for Reiger Park now feel out of place. Many have left Reiger Park for the surrounding suburbs or other areas, and this is leaving a void that might not be easy to fill. Yet, there are a few diehards that are trying to make a difference. May the Lord Bless them!

What bothers me most, given where we come from, is that there is no clearly defined and common goal that a place like Reiger Park can strive towards. It seems that it is hard to find a person or persons who look ahead for the common good of this community. Most of those squandering resources as local politicians pretending to fight for the people merely seem to jump on the bandwagon for personal gain.

Yet, what still amazes me about Reiger Park is that, in any given situation, whether good or bad, when this community feels that it is being attacked from the outside, within or from wherever, it joins forces and stands up as one. I would like to see the day that the majority of the people of Reiger Park realise that they have now become homeowners, and are not merely renting from the Council. They must develop more self-respect and pride in their surroundings. Then we will find a cleaner, safer, more beautiful Reiger Park. This might also reduce the incidence of people roaming the streets without any apparent purpose.

One can congratulate the people of Reiger Park who, through all their trials and tribulations, often go unnoticed by the rest of South Africa. The community of Reiger Park has people on both sides of the coin: the best of its kind as well as some of the more notorious 'bad elements'. Reiger Park has produced the likes of medical doctors, judges, lawyers, accountants, professors, you name it. A place to be proud of and not to be afraid or ashamed of.

The inhabitants of Reiger Park should take a step back to reflect on their history for they can learn a lot from it. The Reiger Park of today is not the one we moved to during the 1960s. There was no Civic Centre, no library, no proper clinic, no swimming pool, no police station, not any of the things that are taken for granted today. A lot of people sweated, fought for, marched, threw stones, burned property, went to jail and some even died for what we have today. Let us respect, protect and maintain what we have. The purpose was to bring about change for the better. It is time to find a new purpose to sustain and build on the successes we achieved. The majority of our descendants will be here for years to come.

July 2021

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Jerry Theys: Community worker, journalist and much more

Marilyn Morden

I was born in Krugersdorp, in a small place known as Cape Settlements. I am the middle child of three siblings, the others being a younger brother and an elder sister. My brother passed away recently. Life dealt him a hard hand; he was drinking and all that. He looked up to me as a father figure. We never had a father figure in our lives. I still miss him as he was always next to me and needed my help. My sister has been in Canada for the last forty years. Although I remember little about the place where I was born, I remember the houses to be extremely small, by comparison smaller than those known as the Doubles in Reiger Park. My family moved to Newclare to stay with my grandmother, Elizabeth Rodriquez, in her big house. My mother, Lizzy Theys (née Moses), worked as a domestic aid for a Jewish family and had to stay for a whole month before we could see her. I always longed to see her. Sometimes she would let us know that she would come at a certain time. I remember waiting very excitedly at the station for her to arrive, only to wait in vain. My mother was my grannie's eldest child and was treated more like a stepsister than a real sister. Other sisters of my mother also stayed there with my grannie. They never treated us nicely. I was not happy staying there. I felt as if my siblings and I were just dropped off by our mother.

I started school in Newclare. I suffered from an inferiority complex that would take years to disappear. I never used to like school, could not concentrate, and lived in fear of people. I was overly aware that I hailed from a poor section. My patched clothes and bare feet were tell-tale signs. I feared Mr Goliath, the vice-principal who eventually became principal. He would hit you for no reason and seemed to enjoy it. The well-off children were treated okay, but the poor ones were hit unnecessarily. Twenty years later, while doing photographic work, my path crossed with that of Mr Goliath, who was retired from school by then. He was in charge of the School for the Blind in Coronationville. I could sense that he remembered humiliating me as a child, thinking that I would be nothing, but I did not have the courage to confront

him. Seeing him made me relive the fear and all those other negative feelings.

I left school at the end of Standard 8 which I completed at the Eurafrican Training Centre (ETC) in Fietas, Fordsburg. I then worked as an apprentice spray painter at a furniture factory, although I did not really have a say in this career. At that time men used to work in furniture or leather factories, while women were employed in clothing factories. My dream was to study furniture design. With this in mind I wrote to an American correspondence college based in Cape Town. Furniture design was not in their prospectus, but they allowed me to do part of a course in perspective drawing. I did not even own a drawing board but was given one by a Chinese guy. I was really interested in what I was doing and realised that I could make a success of whatever I chose.

I had a romantic relationship with a lady from the orphanage in Sophiatown. Through her friend I met Johnny Carolus. Johnny was a teacher who majored in Psychology. Meeting Johnny was the best thing that could have happened to me. Johnny was everything I was not. He had a strong personality, high self-esteem, and no lack of confidence. That time I was reading Psychology books to self-improve. I longed to be someone who could speak up and be somebody. Johnny told me that I myself would have to overcome my lack of confidence. He took me under his wing by providing me with Psychology magazines from the UK to read. Those magazines with its articles, e.g., how to concentrate or how to relax, became like a bible to me. We would meet on Saturdays at Johnny's house. He expected me to explain a long list of vocabulary from this reading matter. Years later, when I started *The Beam* in Reiger Park, Johnny became a principal in Newclare. Much to my regret I must admit that we never visited each other. After Johnny's death I met his wife, Josephine, once and we had a good chat about him. I regret not pursuing my friendship with Johnny when I moved to Reiger Park.

Jerry Theys (CH Morden).

I met Constance (Connie) a nurse, whose family was forcibly removed from Bloemfontein and Albertsville. She would become my wife and two daughters Gillian and Elise were born from this union. We got married in Sophiatown. As a newly wedded couple we looked for a place to stay and moved to Reiger Park. My employer was the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA) Reiger Park and my designation was that of Information Officer as well as secretary. I was trained briefly at SANCA's head office in Durban about the effects of alcohol and drug abuse. That equipped me to conduct numerous workshops and meetings with various organisations e.g. sports groups, religious, educational, and industry bodies. My job at SANCA gave me status in the community, with the result that I served on many committees. One such committee was that

of St Anthony's Catholic Church, but more about this later. While working for SANCA I completed a course in photography and photojournalism with the International Correspondence College of Education and got my own darkroom. Churches and schools approached me to take photos of their events and to send them to the newspaper. I freelanced for various newspapers and magazines, e.g., the *Boksburg Advertiser* locally, *Rapport Ekstra* nationally, and the magazine *Panorama*. The remuneration was good!

My path crossed with that of Father Stan Brennan, doyen of the local Catholic Church. This Irish priest taught me the value of the power of the mind. If you can visualise it, you have reached your goal. I learned to stop worrying, to trust in God and to believe that God would provide. Father Stan was given a plot by the mines and with perseverance he transformed the dilapidated buildings into an educational and training centre. In my capacity as cameraman, I had to attend fundraising functions and write articles. Sister Mary was given the task of editing my work, but instead of editing she rewrote it, with the result that I was not too keen on writing articles anymore. I had enough work apart from writing articles. Father Stan was not happy with me at all. One just never said 'no' to Father Stan. If you happened to get on his wrong side, he would *bêre jou 'n bumper*, a colloquial way of saying he will get his revenge!

In due course I got a job as reporter/photographer and dark-room technician at *Beeld*, which was organised by Jac Rabie the politician. Marketing and advertising were added later. Because of this work I travelled a lot, especially to Coloured areas in what was then known as the Transvaal. I would stay for two to three days in the places I visited e.g., Klerksdorp and Pietersburg (Polokwane today), and could assess the level of cultural and sports activities in the Coloured communities in those areas. Those communities fared poorly compared to Reiger Park and Eersterust regarding the number of activities and the level of commitment of the people. There were instances where even Reiger Park lacked this commitment. Here I am thinking of only one father and his two sons who came on a Saturday to attend junior soccer practice.

This lack of commitment was noticeable at tennis too. The community asked for tennis courts to be erected. Allen Scott from Coronationville, an acquaintance, went to the United Kingdom to study tennis coaching. He arrived at the local tennis court with rackets and sponsorships. At the beginning the schools sent lots of children, but eventually their numbers dwindled. What happened to the budding tennis stars, and what happened eventually to the tennis courts? The fence was broken, and the nets stolen. Another example is the support of the local community of the St Anthony's Skills Training Centre. I once asked a group of men lazing in the sun to come see me in connection with learning the skill of shoe repairs at the said Centre. They promised me high and low that they would come. They never pitched.

In 1981 I was still working for *Beeld* when unrest hit Reiger Park. I would identify two main causes for this riot. Firstly, there was the Indian monopoly of the taxi business that was fraught with bribery. The second factor was the lack of housing for many people. To be on a waiting list for 25 years is ridiculous. It made the people angry, and angry people had an urge to destroy. Although locals participated in the looting of Indian-owned stores there had been allegations that the police parked their trucks in the yards of the businesses, loaded the trucks and set fire to the buildings. There was no love lost between Indian and White people.

Some invisible power guided me to start *The Beam*. My years with *Beeld* gave me invaluable experience. At first, I thought about collaborating with a colleague, but it did not work. I was looking for someone who would share my passion and

commitment. *The Beam*, a free monthly community newspaper distributed to communities on the East Rand which I started in 1984 and of which I was the sole owner and publisher, is not to be confused with the magazine of a similar name published by St Anthony's Catholic Church. In fact, that was where I got the name from for my newspaper, which upset Father Stan very much. *The Beam* was printed in Springs. Advertisements came mostly from Indian- and White-owned businesses. The only local shop that advertised in *The Beam* was the grocery store Super Save in Reiger Park. I was not allowed to distribute *The Beam* in Black areas on the East Rand because of apartheid regulations. I had an office in town, across from Standard Bank, which was against the apartheid laws. The owner, a local magistrate, told me to refer people to him, my 'boss', if I were to be accosted. *The Beam* had a life span of eleven years, lasting till 1995. Running it took a lot out of me. It was a struggle just to make ends meet. Today I realise that it was the power in me that gave me the strength to carry on. I considered *The Beam* apolitical, its purpose being to uplift people and give them exposure. Ironically, it was politics that caused its demise. Politicians would confront me about their rivals featuring in my paper.

Many hopeful people wanting to start their own newspaper asked for my advice. My answer to them was, and still is: if you want to do it, just start. I am strongly convinced that anybody can write. It is the start that stops most people. In the second place, be prepared; have a plan. For example, know what type of newspaper; know what size you want your newspaper to be, A4 or A3; decide beforehand on how many pages; make sure you have enough money to start it; make an agreement with a printer for the next twelve months at least. People also asked me for photos. Eventually I got tired of giving all the time.

Thereafter I worked for St Anthony's Adult Education Centre as Liaison and Media officer. My job included fundraising, printing, designing, and photographic work doing brochures, leaflets, advertising and magazines. The centre catered for mostly Black students from areas such as Vosloorus and Katlehong, offering basic literacy, matric and degrees. For the latter, students had to enrol with Unisa and were tutored by lecturers from Unisa. Black students came in their thousands. Some even had to be turned away. They came after work and attended come rain or sunshine. Classes lasted till 9 o'clock, and then the journey home by taxi was waiting. I have seldom experienced such commitment that these students had, unlike the people from Reiger Park. I will illustrate by way of an example. When the government declared that teachers with a Standard 8 school leaving qualification had to upgrade to Standard 10, many local teachers registered at the Adult Education Centre. With the arrival of the first cold day their numbers decreased until only two were left and the class had to close.

My next job was at St Anthony's Skills Training Centre, employed as Public Relations Officer, a job I would hold for more than five years. But first the principal and I were assigned to start the skills training centre from scratch. For this reason, we visited the Building Industry Federation of South Africa (BIFSA) where we were advised which tools, machinery, and equipment to buy. This was not all. Our advisors shared valuable information on the lay-out of the different workshops. Fortunately, I had the presence of mind to use my photographic skills and captured everything on film. Hereafter I had to scout for the best prices before purchasing what we required. Did I mention that I was a pro?! Well, except for roof installation, I learned all the trades in the building industry and applied them on many occasions at home and elsewhere. I also had to instruct the trainees when the need arose. Subsequently courses in bricklaying, plumbing, plastering, painting, tiling, electricity, welding, carpentry, upholstering, shoe repairing, dressmaking, designing and arts and crafts were

introduced, as well as computer and secretarial courses. I served on the executive committee of St Anthony's Adult Education and Skills Training for twenty-four years.

It was always my desire to render a service to the sick, especially in poor communities. After studying reflexology, reiki, massage, relaxation techniques, physiology, anatomy, and metaphysics, I qualified as a reflexologist. I registered with the Allied Health Professional Council. I was self-employed as a reflexologist and primary healthcare counsellor.

I worked for Thembani Home Based Centre (THBC) in Ramaphosa informal settlement, adjacent to Reiger Park. The centre was a sink-and-wood structure and struggled to make ends meet. The centre catered for patients with Aids, TB, cancer, and other incurable diseases. Clinics and hospitals would refer cases to THBC, where trained volunteers would feed patients and provide them with medication. My duty was to manage the volunteers, attend to correspondence and reports, liaise with various organisations, keep the clinics and hospitals informed, and fundraise.[1]

Then Kodak Africa offered me a job as programme facilitator. I had to train and improve South Africa's street photographers' and freelancers' photographic skills. I travelled to all the main cities throughout the country to conduct the workshops.

My last formal job was at Harambe Development and Resource Centre in Reiger Park, where I was employed as centre manager. Harambe used the buildings erected by the East Rand Alumni Society. This was an NGO, so all activities were offered free of charge. The community could go there for computer training and internet services. Matriculants could do research. Co-operatives were formed to manufacture school uniforms, and up-and-coming local business owners were assisted with training and registration. Lots of money was coming in, but unfortunately it went hand in hand with corruption. An American organisation donated computers and flat screen television sets that were put in a room intended for use by small-business partners. This room was never used. I did not know where to complain. I even approached the Boksburg Chamber of Commerce, but to no avail. When Harambe eventually lost their subsidy, the people in control wanted to get rid of me. If I suggested something it was pushed aside. Before I left, I managed to get a few senior people of good standing in the community together to keep an eye on the happenings at Harambe.

Now a few last words about Reiger Park. I will discuss the negatives first. The abuse of drugs is a real evil. Youngsters are brought up well, but then you find that because of drug abuse they behave like animals. The community has to help the youth to fight these negative forces. The help should be non-religious and non-political. We must help the youth to find their goal and vision in life. Another negative force is crime. We must remember that the gangster is also seeking recognition. I always treated gangsters with respect when our paths crossed. I tried to get across to them that I still saw some good in them and admonished them to change their lives, to which I always received a positive response.

Then there are the pop-up churches. At one time there were more than 200 registered churches. Churches just registered so that they could qualify for a plot. Unfortunately, I see little, if any, changes brought on by these churches, the main reason being that each church was working independently from the other. When interviewing these church leaders, I found that some of the pastors still spoke like *tsotsis,* i.e., hoodlums. Nothing positive or sensible was uttered by most of them. Another negative aspect is the tendency to bad-mouth people who try to do something good in the community.

On to the positives. Reiger Park has great people, with lots of potential. Think of clergy such as the Seventh-Day Adventist pastor, Johann Abrahams. He was a down to earth man and so involved with

the youth. He moved on to a top position in the SDA structures. I also have a lot of respect for the East Rand Alumni Society. During its existence it was a force to be reckoned with. Not everyone can erect a building and do what it had done. Culturally and on the sports fields, there are numerous examples of greatness. The schools are doing their best to recognise talent.

Although I am retired, I am a busy octogenarian! The Reuven Retirement Complex, where I reside, caters for more than 300 pensioners. We started a committee a few years ago to attend to the needs of the residents and to ensure that our human rights are not violated. Here I experienced a miracle: I had problems with my computer and asked Meals on Wheels for assistance. The technician told me that my computer was too old to be repaired. Meals on Wheels then blessed me with a laptop. I was familiarising myself with my newly acquired laptop, browsing the internet, when I stumbled across the American University of Metaphysical Science. The flame that was ignited almost twenty years ago when I completed a course in metaphysics was rekindled. What attracted me was the great deal the university offered me as a pensioner. I completed a diploma in Practical Metaphysics. That served as the stepping stone to register for and complete a bachelor's degree. At the beginning of 2017 I received my master's degree, after my thesis had been rejected three times. Now I am busy with my doctoral studies. I would still like to get involved with the youth of Orlando East, which is close to Reuven. I want to teach them the power of the mind, help them to reach their goals and to energise them. In the meantime, I must look after myself and keep this machine going.

Based on Jerry Theys's written inputs and an interview conducted by Cecil H Morden and Marilyn Morden on 30 September 2019.

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Small battles win wars: The magic of the in-between moments

Eugene Absolom

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

– Mohandas Gandhi

New beginnings

In the late 1970s when my father, Isaac Albert Absolom, honoured the next step in his spiritual calling, he called us together as a family and made an announcement that would irrevocably alter all our lives. He was then a pastor at the Apostolic Faith Mission Church in Pietermaritzburg and was approached to move to Boksburg to further his vocation in ministry. The possibility of new adventures should have been uppermost in our minds as kids, but it was a very different time then. Apartheid brought about much unrest, and this relocation essentially meant leaving our relatives, friends, and the comfort of our familiar surroundings to move to the Highveld where we effectively knew no one. In fairness, to a sheltered adolescent boy from a sleepy town, and based only on hearsay, the bright lights of the Golden City held some attraction, notwithstanding the national reputation of Johannesburg as the 'crime capital'.

I suppose that's the thing about not being able to see into the future: there might be the element of fear around the unknown, but it can never fully eclipse the anticipation of something new and exciting. We walked by faith that we would be protected, that whatever we were purposed to do would be realised, and that we would go on to make a positive impact wherever we landed. As a family connected and serving through ministry, this had been our experience and so we hoped for more of the same. As I packed the last of my belongings and looked down the street, it was the start of many new and profound experiences that would bring immeasurable fulfilment and transformation in my personal and professional life.

The new neighbourhood

We moved to Reiger Park, Boksburg, toward the end of 1977, and were soon enrolled to complete our education. Besides the obvious climatic change, what struck me immediately was a distinct class stratification within this Coloured community. The residential demarcations were stark and soon we associated certain subsections with teachers, welders, blue-collar workers, and later addresses were associated with professionals. There were blocks of flats, single- and double-quarter dwellings that were quite a contrast from the Pietermaritzburg community where I had spent some of my childhood. Our new surroundings were quite different from what we were used to, but adaptability was called for, and we made it work. When we landed, we first moved into a block of flats (C Flat) where being harassed by gang members was not uncommon when walking to and from school. It was 'adapt or die' for a naïve and protected 12-year-old from a neighbourhood where people looked out for one another. Observing criminal elements from time to time and seeing the economic conditions up close urged me to finish school. I promptly added street smart to the other life skills I needed to master on my 'Johannesburg' adventure.

I completed high school at Oosrand High School and then set off to Cape Town for the next milestone on my personal and professional journey, pursuing studies in the Social Sciences at the University of the Western Cape. This field inspired me and aligned to my Christian beliefs of serving others. Over the years I witnessed the work my parents contributed to the community but knew that I also had to assist beyond the spiritual realm.

Upon returning from UWC I returned to the Reiger Park community to briefly teach at my old high school, which proved deeply rewarding and illuminating. This role often led me to conduct home visits. It was during these moments that I absorbed the stark realities of the lives of these young students beyond the benches, classroom pranks and homework assignments. This left an ineradicable impression on me. Some things were a little more complicated than they initially appeared and many of these youngsters were battling just to get to, and through school, for so many complicated reasons.

In due course I left teaching and pursued a role in the South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (SANCA). I was convinced that I could apply my knowledge and experience to make a difference in communities that were losing their way. I applied for this vacancy once before, but it was only on my second application that I was successful. I joined SANCA Reiger Park in Goede Hoop Avenue in 1987, taking up a position as Public Relations and Information Officer. The organisation has a proud history of being a leader in the field of prevention and treatment of chemical dependence in South Africa. The Reiger Park Chapter served all the Coloured communities on the East Rand.

Passion, exuberance, and experience helped me contribute to the small team under the leadership of a seasoned social worker, Ms Gerty Dick. The SANCA vision strongly resonated with me as I became acutely aware of the systematic and extensive unravelling of our society through alcohol and drug abuse and dependency. My key areas of responsibility included, among others:

- creating public awareness of the effects of alcoholism and drug abuse;
- training volunteers and groups; and
- PR, fundraising and related administrative duties.

Observing the deleterious effects of substance abuse and the profound power of the adolescent personal tale, I was floored by the compound impacts on daily life. There were so many things we took for granted, like having a job, relationships, vocation, or vision. For others every day was another instalment of derailment on course to a dead end. Literally and figuratively. So many people simply couldn't cope without a chemical crutch, but the issues were

complex. Clients either did not realise, did not want to know, or could not imagine an alternative, or perhaps they realized but thought they had it all under control. Some simply did not know where or how to ask for help.

In formulating solutions, we were confronted with the nuances in Reiger Park. The socio-economic challenges of our communities ravaged by apartheid were many and layered. Deep-rooted systemic webs of symptoms masqueraded as aimlessness, a need for belonging, a lack of personal accountability or complacency. We didn't have all the answers, but it was clear that it wasn't linear. It would demand a combination of interventions to address the psychosocial impacts of segregation, unemployment, inequality in education and access to basic resources.

The organisation underwent a leadership transition at a governance level. The board consisted of young professionals, among others Mr Henry Jeffreys, Ms Brenda Weimers and Mr Brandon Anderson. The election of an existing board member, Mr Cecil Morden, as new chairperson ushered in a fresh approach to the broader role of SANCA in Coloured communities on the East Rand. As part of a cohort of young professionals from Reiger Park his innovative endeavours sought to reconceptualise the SANCA intervention more especially towards preventative initiatives while destigmatising the treatment and/or addiction phenomenon. This would be catalytic in raising the willingness of people to become informed, but also to prioritise their wellness in the face of the myriad challenges that engulfed our disenfranchised and displaced community.

I opted to apply my knowledge, experience, and energies to preventative resources. Pre-emptive interventions would address root causes of addiction – exploring personal, intergenerational narratives and dominant mental models – offering a wider perspective on the choices available in dealing with life's daily challenges and opportunities. In essence, it was critical for clients to see that their decisions have momentum and, despite the presumed dead end they were heading towards, that there were options. They could make something of themselves beyond their current reality even in the absence of mounting evidence or motivation.

Our goal in principle was to shift the gear from the antisocial, destructive use of alcohol toward more informed and responsible action. The initiatives increased awareness of the power of hope and choice, something that in large sectors of the population appeared to have been systematically and subconsciously stripped away through a greater sociopolitical force. Aligned to the curative treatment programmes, quality of life, respect and dignity would be restored, and thus we set about creating information sharing and support frameworks to reach the Reiger Park community and beyond. Battles are entered with solid intelligence, and as an organisation we needed to fully understand the individual, communal and broader societal terrain we were entering.

The breakdown

Human beings participate in intricate systems such that our thoughts, emotions, and interpretations of life are the products of a meaning system that exists within several environmental levels. Stated differently, depending where and how a person grew up, cultural and historical factors will greatly influence his or her beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. This similarly applies to his or her perception of alcohol dependence. The family unit is our primary society, so a parent or caregiver consuming alcohol may give children a stronger impression on the acceptability of drinking.

Experiences of trauma, such as apartheid and its host of policies, dealt a profoundly destructive blow to the family structure prior to the democratic regime in South Africa. We observed how job reservation, low salaries, and the compromised

A SANCA Reiger Park hike in the mid-1990s: Sitting: Eugene Absolom, Elaine Opperman and Jacoba Saaiman (in wheelchair). Standing: Vincent Opperman, Vania Minnaar, Beryl Moosa and Otto de Wee (Morden collection).

capacity of parents to provide for their families exacerbated already mounting psychosocial challenges. A profound and sweeping consequence of this travesty was the damage done to the self-esteem of particularly Coloured males in Reiger Park and the surrounding townships. This phenomenon was of course not limited to these areas or even the province. This effortlessly defragmented the family structure and resulted in children being raised in single-parent family set-ups. In a better world, growing children would be raised by (both) parents who were willing and able to care for them, experiencing zero to minimal exposure to violence, substance abuse or trauma such as political violence, stripped identity, and other forms of injustice. But the apartheid architecture tore families apart as parents could not always live together. Laws created stressors on the family unit, fuelling substance abuse, primarily of alcohol as evidenced by numerous studies.[1]

Reiger Park was established as a result of discriminatory laws like the Group Areas Act. This act was the architectural blueprint of physical separation of the races, i.e., Coloured, Indian, Black and White people. Dictating separate residential areas for the different racial groups as a means of removing Black communities living in 'White areas' to their own separate areas proved particularly effective. Buffer strips separated the residential areas, but the damage was done. Prior to the establishment of Reiger Park, Coloured people experienced a sense of connectedness in the areas

they originated from. Neighbours and friends were more like family. In sum, the end game of the Group Areas Act was palpable social decay, effectively unravelling the tapestry of the family and hence the community. Substance abuse, violence and systematic self-destruction hovered not far off, easily sparked effortlessly by the slightest provocation. Our community did not escape these consequences.

Through our casework we also observed another interesting yet devastating phenomenon. As families broke down, the burden of children caring for their parents befell a number of youngsters who ended up fulfilling adults' emotional, physical survival and at times even financial needs. As they potentially missed out on key formative experiences, many developed maladaptive social and emotional responses. Many studies further revealed that this easily translated into negative behaviours carried into adulthood including emotional conditions such as depressive disorders, antisocial, and self-destructive personality traits. In the Reiger Park context children of alcohol-dependent parents most often presented as youngsters fending for themselves and for others within a broken family system. With this understanding and experience, some form of preventative work proved invaluable.

The machinations of apartheid brought huge rates of unemployment among Black South Africans and the aftershocks were rife. A lack of facilities, absence of extramural activities, boredom and peer pressure rendered alcohol abuse an alluring quick fix. Drinking swiftly created a subculture: it was cool, imbued a sense of belonging, served as a rite of passage, and became a key pastime. It was how things were. Besides, what else was there to do? What were the alternatives? All the attempts at doing the usual things like finding a job and making enough money to improve their lives felt more like going up against a brick wall. Some might even not have had a voice in their marriages, workplaces, or social interactions, and over time it dictated an intergenerational narrative where alcohol abuse was normalised. Eventually the passing out, blackouts, violent outbursts, altercations, and promiscuity became non-events. Days and weeks became blurred and life goals and dreams evaporated. Children do as they see and come to identify with the 'as is' or the current situation, having no credible evidence or even the vision of an alternative future. Unless checked, they absorb their surroundings as life truths and set the ceiling of what is possible. And so vicious cycles of multi-layered regression are perpetuated. We knew that education, support and advocacy were critical for families living with alcohol dependence and raised awareness of alcohol misuse as early and widely as possible.

Major challenges

Despite its prevalence and positive results, SANCA Reiger Park initially carried a negative connotation. In the late 1980s it was a place you would rather not be referred to, and your attendance or membership would be shared more in confidence than connection. Chances were that you would be judged. Harshly and unfairly. Judged both for getting addicted and for seeking help.

Misinformation and ignorance are always counterproductive and there was a tendency to target the person battling addiction to the exclusion of the other components in the system. Alcoholism and drug abuse were regarded as personal failures and met with rejection instead of understanding and support. People made statements; they did not ask questions. No one really wondered or cared about what brought someone to the point of hopelessness or social isolation where escaping into temporary oblivion trumped all the attempts at finding gainful employment, feeling worthy, or raising their children. Indeed, from my interactions with many of these men I found instead an expectation that adults (men in particular) should deal with life and their circumstances themselves. Due to apartheid, Black men raised to be protectors, providers and decision-makers who weren't allowed

the luxury of vulnerability, saw very few options to regain their manhood on equal terms.

Holding down a job, maintaining healthy family relationships and building social support networks are harder for any man or woman in the chokehold of addiction. We saw the opportunity of levelling the playing field through broad-based interventions reaching as many people as we could. Prevention trumping cure is always best with chemical addictions. You simply never know how someone will respond mentally, emotionally, and physically. As a result of ignorance about the dynamics of addiction we did not enjoy much communal support at the time. The perception was that people chose to start drinking and should thus be able to stop at any time, by themselves. Addiction crossed the class divide in the township. A more expensive car or 'better' address had very little to do with how well people coped with their problems.

Programme funding posed a huge challenge. We were only 75% subsidised by the government, but it was not adequate. SANCA was generously sponsored by Otis Elevators that aligned closely to the youth focus, and this was where the preventative initiatives would land best. What we lacked in resources we made up for in commitment and worked with what we had at our disposal.

The breakthrough

The preventative route allowed us more traction as it was designed to address the gap between information, knowledge, and observable change. Once people were empowered and intentional about their personal accountability in overcoming substance addiction, our awareness and preventative efforts were matched and shifts slowly materialised. They needed to broaden their options in long-term endeavours like earning a living and getting their children through school, but they also needed immediate help with basic abilities like stress management and resilience building. Many lacked spiritual grounding, purpose, and a sense of belonging and our programmes met these fundamental human needs in some way or another.

The following SANCA interventions created the much-needed shift. These included our awareness campaigns, soccer tournaments, our inter-denominational Youth Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (YADA) project and our hiking group.

Awareness campaigns

All chapters of SANCA across the country participated in an annual SANCA National Awareness Week, each of which targeted a different focal aspect of addiction.

Soccer tournaments

One of our most successful initiatives was the introduction of an Annual Junior Soccer Tournament for primary school boys in the community. This two-week school holiday programme where all the local junior soccer clubs were invited offered and promoted physical and viable extramural activities to many boys, including those at risk. We worked in partnership with the local soccer fraternity. People such as Bobbai Champion, Fillie Champion, Aubrey Dick and Winston Nelson from the soccer structures all played a key role in organising the junior teams as well as making the WJ Clements Stadium available every year. Oom Jerry Theys also ensured that the annual tournament received substantial coverage in *The Beam* newspaper.

This tournament provided an alternative to alcohol and drug abuse, inculcating team spirit, a much-desired sense of belonging, healthy competition and camaraderie often not found in their families. For many, the existence of a viable alternative opened a world of possibilities. Through sport key values and principles came into play in pragmatic ways. Many were playing for a trophy and medals, but in reality, they were playing an all-in game of survival against bullying, negative role modelling, peer pressure and the numbing, albeit temporal, comfort of chemicals they may or may not

be able to walk away from when they discovered something meaningful in life. Many were building the capacity to break a negative family legacy.

The programme worked on rewiring mental models so that they could arrest the dominant intergenerational narrative about temptations and limited, boxed-in thinking. You cannot do something differently until you think differently and that meant exposure, information, solid role models, mentors and support, and concrete evidence that trying something outside of what you know produces something better. For many, unlike previous generations, they recognised for the first time the opportunities available that were counterculture and that would not go without resistance, but they were not alone. There were testimonials and success stories and slowly their horizons opened.

Youth Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Within SANCA we also established the inter-denominational Youth Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (YADA) project to positively influence awareness and prevention among high school students and school leavers. The group included key members such as Vanessa Moosa, Lionel Sampson, Vaughn Flusk and was led by Trevor Reeby. The group organised concerts at schools, information talks at youth clubs, and social events.

Hiking group

Through strong encouragement from Cecil Morden, we established the first hiking group, taking at-risk high school youths for 5- to 7-day hikes during their school holidays. I was thrown into the deep end and was responsible for organising our first hike. Hiking was fun. It got the group out into the beauty of nature, involved challenging and vigorous exercise, discipline and problem-solving, but more than that those trips offered a sense of family. Mr and Mrs Vincent and Elaine Opperman as well as an experienced explorer, Mr Otto de Wee, took care of us. These trips were a welcome getaway, and the young people explored the amazing sights and geographies of KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, and Limpopo among others. Teamwork, trust, developing physical and mental tenacity, and optimal conditions for reflection offered these young hikers new vistas. For just a few days they were beyond and above the daily humdrum of survival, monotony, and often adverse domestic conditions. Decades on, there are many other private and public hiking groups still in operation.

The programme through information and process allowed seeds of belief, connection, and support to be nurtured over time. We saw well-adjusted communities as these young men and women rose above their personal challenges and raised families who in turn would establish even stronger, rooted communities. It was not just about making it out of school; many became well-adjusted members of the communities they now live in. Others became successful men and women who went on to become professional contributors in society, members of the clergy, educators, chartered accountants, entrepreneurs, and many more.

Conclusion

Four decades on, following many victories for democracy, some transformation is evident. There are advancements in technology, and we are inhabitants and participants of a global village. New generations are approaching life in unprecedented ways. There are careers that did not exist when we embarked on our trek from the coast and many current jobs will become obsolete. Having spent many years travelling across the world in various capacities I never dreamed of remote work, and yet this (my home office or sofa) is the new world. Many of the people that walked the path with us are no more. Living with the aftershocks of the global Covid-19 pandemic means new ways of existing and living. Generally, I observe our communities and many things are still very much the same.

Flags, buildings, and street names have changed, leadership changed, and employment equity has positively impacted representation of groups in various sectors, yet the people of Reiger Park and surrounding communities are still ambushed by the landmines of apartheid, and non-delivery of service by the new government at all levels: local, provincial, and national. We are still, perhaps even more so, waging war on substance addiction. Stress, being overwhelmed, mental illness, crime, corruption, constant change, and uncertainty are but some of the factors that sabotage the wellness and balance of our vulnerable communities.

Sometimes the sheer numbers are daunting, and it might be hard to figure out where to start but focusing on the small and systemic victories brings sustainable change. Small battles win wars and, as I have come to appreciate over time, small, measured steps reach destinations too. It comes down to the belief, hearts and hands of committed citizens and organisations such as SANCA and its current and erstwhile leaders, its generous donors and supporters who worked tirelessly to arrest the devastating impacts of addiction. They support and empower youth, women and men who go on to build the lives they envision with good mental and physical health, positive self-regard, and a game plan. Life matters. Perspective matters. Change matters. It all adds up.

As I reflect on a journey of so many precious experiences, meeting new friends, and establishing new networks, I remain inspired by the immense power of our shared humanity and what can be achieved when a handful of committed men and women place service and positive transformation above obstacles and limitations. It's not about having all the answers. Sometimes it is about the magic and potential of the in-between moments.

3 August 2021

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My family in Germiston and Reiger Park

Doreen Solomons

Germiston, a small town in the heart of the East Rand goldfields, was founded in 1886 after the local discovery of gold. It was named after a farm called Germiston near Glasgow. In 1921 the world's largest gold refinery was established in Germiston. We knew the area as 'Germiston Location', also known as the 'Cape Stands'. I honestly did not have the foggiest idea about all this rich history when we were young playing marbles, *kennetjie*, various skipping rope games, *gaatjieklip* and *drie blikkies,* most of the time barefoot on the only grass patch opposite our house. In the sandy streets of this quaint little town everybody knew everyone and the true meaning of ubuntu was practiced long before the word was made popular after 1993.

Born in Germiston

I am one of six children born in Germiston some 73 years ago.[1] I am Doreen Solomons. My siblings Rhoda, Andy (Andrew), Vicky (Victor), Lynette and Vivian and I were the children of Andrew and Gertrude, aunty Gerty to her family and friends. We were a middle-class family who shared love, respect, and essential human virtues. We were skilled in, among other things, sound basic academics, and were introduced to reading, song, eisteddfods, sport and piano lessons, and each member of the family participated in the church choir. We had a lot of fun, humour, laughter, happiness, contentment and, may I add, very strict discipline, tough love, and respect. We were born into sound Christian principles. Our father, an evangelist in the Methodist Church, served Germiston and the rest of the East Rand Congregations. My mom was our caregiver, tutor, guide, and primary disciplinarian.

My dad, the visionary

My father, a true visionary, had the spirit of wisdom and revelation about him. He was talented, noble and, at times, radical and an eloquent speaker, teacher and preacher, a respected leader in this community and vice-principal at Germiston Primary School, a Commissioner of Oaths, member of the Germiston Advisory Board, Boy Scout leader and

'drill master'. Those years the whole school came out at the same time for Physical Education, and I remember my father standing in front and giving commands from the stoep as to what we should do.

My father's involvement in sport

He was a keen sportsman, and he played tennis and golf. A basketball team, the formidable Shamrocks, was established and my dad and Juffrou Violet Fortuin, my Sub A teacher, managed and coached in the early 1950s. The team consisted of my sister, cousins, and a few other members of the community. I remember matches that they played and how we were tagged along to all the matches and sang victory songs on the way home on a truck, the only mode of transport. They played games in Edenvale, Pretoria and Benoni. They were a powerful force to be reckoned with. I still have the group photo taken in 1951 when they won a shield and a cup with me as the basketball team mascot. The oldest surviving member of this club is Ruth Hansrod-Pillay, now 86 years old, who still remembers the strict coach my dad was, and how they had to be proud of the uniform and game skills and ensure that they did their best.

I must mention Albert Johanneson, a professional footballer, who hailed from Germiston and was a unique soccer player. He was the first person of African heritage to play in an FA Cup final, in 1965. It is indeed a great pity and very sad that he did not receive the recognition that was due to him. His family is well-known to us.

My father as Commissioner of Oaths

With the introduction of the Group Areas Act and the Population Registration Act in 1950, my dad was tasked to obtain information from the community in Germiston and nearby farms for the green identity card that was to be issued. He was, as I was told by my mum, also extremely busy obtaining information for the 1951 census.

There are several stories doing the rounds that families who lived in Germiston and adjacent farms had no surnames. They were just known by their Christian names. Stories are shared about how my father asked about their whereabouts and where they were born, and how they decided on a surname together. This must surely have been a very creative and interesting process.

As my father was a Commissioner of Oaths at that time, we also had people regularly flocking to our house for various reasons: with forms to be signed, affidavits to be drawn up and many other issues that we as children were not aware of. I remember my father was once summoned to an inmate in jail and had to take his big, black, heavy Hammond typewriter along. It turned out that he had to type the inmate's last will and testament while sitting on the floor, as there were no tables or chairs around.

Germiston, the Cape Stands, and sport facilities

Germiston had no tarred roads at all. We only saw these big yellow caterpillar trucks at times levelling the narrow roads after big rains, as furrows started to form in these brown, sandy areas. We had taps strategically placed on each end of a street corner where we fetched water in big brasso-polished buckets. We had three of these, each of which two of us had to carry. Wastewater had to be thrown in huge circular cement containers, also strategically situated in the middle of dedicated places, which the municipality trucks came to siphon out at regular intervals. I remember the big round cement containers were covered with tough mesh wire at the top. There were also communal latrines and washing sites that the community of Germiston utilised.

What was also characteristic about Germiston was the unbearable stench that prevailed when the dirt water and the toilet buckets were collected once a week by the municipality. Another strange and extremely hazardous product came from the

Andrew Solomons (front, third from right) with members of the Germiston Methodist congregation around the late 1940s, early 1950s (Solomons collection).

National Chemical Products (NCP) factory, adjacent to Germiston Primary School. I remember the tiny bits of snowflake-like 'moth balls' flying all over the place at times, and if they got into your eyes it led to a severe burning sensation. I wonder, in retrospect, whether this was not detrimental to the sight of some of the elderly community members and those with sensitive eyes. This, and other health-threatening issues, must have been part of the discussions had by the municipalities. My dad was probably the only Coloured person on the municipal committee. Germiston was a true little 'cosmopolitan' town, with representatives of all the people of South Africa.

One of my friends was Pat Marudu. We sometimes arranged our separate basketball teams to play a match. I would get the ball and a whistle from my dad, and we would play a full basketball match, with me as both player and umpire. The basketball we played had a similar set-up to netball. Nine players on a side, each playing and staying in their own third. Goals were scored from the goal line, and you were supposed to throw it with both hands in an under-arm position to score a goal.

The Indian and Chinese communities stayed about two to three kilometres away in a place that was plainly and fondly known as *Koeliekamp*. Everybody used this term, and it was not meant to be offensive at the time.

There was a community centre known as the Turton Hall where weddings, school concerts, school plays and other ceremonies took place. Next

to this hall were a large sandy sports field, which had to be swept, and the demarcations of soccer or athletic tracks marked off with lime and water. Adjacent to this were two tennis courts where teams played on Saturdays. The school also made use of this facility. Opposite the school there was another open sandy field that was always cleared, cleaned, and utilised as a basketball/netball court. There were hostels where mineworkers stayed, and they had their soccer matches on Saturdays and Sundays.

Shamrocks Basket Ball Club, 1951: Front: Ziepie Holmes, Doreen Solomons (mascot, 4 years old) and Hilda Johanneson. Middle: Charlotte 'Minnie' Martins, Violet Fortuin (née Johanneson, coach), Andrew Solomons (manager-coach) and Sally Jacobs (later: Fransman). Standing: Francis Malegan, Daphney Steyn (later: Barnes), Rhoda Solomons (later: Hero). Inset right: May Hansrod (later: Barnes). Inset left: Ruth Hansrod (later: Pillay, the actual picture is lost) (Solomons collection).

The community, visitations, and holidays

The families hailed, as far as I know, from the Eastern Cape, Western Cape, Pretoria, Queenstown, Kimberley, Ventersdorp and Napier. There might be other places that I am not aware of. We made regular visits to family in Pretoria, Springs, and Johannesburg, and had regular family holidays in Cape Town and Durban. We visited places of interest like the museums in Pretoria and Johannesburg and the Voortrekker Monument and Union Buildings. We could only visit these places on certain days when 'non-Whites' were allowed. Usually Tuesdays were 'non-White' days. We also visited the zoos in Johannesburg and Pretoria, and always visited neglected picnic spots with tall grass and thorn bushes since they were the only ones available. We often had to clear and flatten it before arranging blankets in shaded areas. Mias farm was a popular place and then there was Irene in Pretoria and Bird Park in later years. On New Year's Day the El Rica's and other bands played and dancing used to be part of the New Year's Day Festivities. When we watched films, we supported the Orient and other cinemas that had two features every Saturday.

Life was carefree as we were born into a house of music, piano lessons, and song. Each child received piano lessons from Juffrou Violet on Tuesday afternoons at our home. We were allocated exactly 15 minutes each. I still remember her chubby hands that did not hesitate to reprimand you when you hit the wrong piano key, with some encouragement from my mother in the kitchen.

My sister Lynette remembers and reminded me, that there was only one post box from which my dad collected the mail and we then had to

deliver letters, especially to older members of the community. At the end of the month their pensions were delivered to them via willing Solomons children with the knowledge that we would get a chocolate or two.

Next to our house the church and the Martins family shared the same yard. In the middle of this yard stood a huge, about 10-12 metres tall, cast-iron church bell that played a prominent role in the history of Methodists in Germiston as this was a prominent part of the call to worship. We attended Sunday School, Junior Guild, later the Senior Guild, church twice on a Sunday, and once every first Sunday of the month as my mother attended the Women's Association and we had to sit quietly at the back of the church. On Wednesday evenings there was a prayer meeting and we had to attend, whether we wrote examinations or not.

My eldest sister, Rhoda, became one of the presidents of the Women's Association in the old Transvaal. There was very close contact between the different faith communities, which consisted of the Methodist, Anglican, Apostolic, Catholic, Dutch Reformed and Ebenezer Churches. Some of these congregations often visited one another, especially during harvest times, Easter and gospel meetings. A good ecumenical bond was established.

Our church went on several excursions to the Leprosy Hospital in Pretoria, taking clothes and food to the patients while sharing prayers, choruses, and words of encouragement. I vividly remember the church outing to Vryburg in the late 1950s, sharing mission work with the Methodist Congregation in Vryburg with Rev Tom Achilles and his congregation. We also enjoyed fun times during our annual bazaars and had social evenings focusing on the talents among the folk. For the holiday celebrations each family had their own mini firework displays on Guys Fawkes evening and on Christmas Eve we had a merry singalong while holding candles in the streets of Germiston.

Sunday services, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides

My dad had preaching commitments on Sundays, and our family usually travelled together whether it was to Springs, Brakpan where my eldest brother met his wife, Alexandra township, Boksburg, Edenvale, or Germiston. I remember when we entered Stirtonville in Boksburg it was enclosed with a big fence. There was a police station as we entered the huge gates. My dad and all visitors had to pull over to obtain an 'entry pass' to lead the sermon at the Stirtonville Methodist Church. I am not sure whether there was a time limit, but we had to leave before sundown. He then had to stop again and drop the permit at the police station.

I was very young when the Boys Scouts were formed, and they had a Boy Scout Brass Band. My elder sister, Lynette, and I attended Girl Guides classes with Juffrou Violet Fortuin who played a prominent role in establishing all the skills and rules of this organisation.

Germiston Primary School

Germiston Primary School was built with red corrugated iron and had three or four prefabricated classrooms. The school hall was also the 'home' of the Ebenezer Church. This school also played a pivotal role in our upbringing. Frank Jacobs, our principal, was an honest, sincere, and disciplined man who ruled the school with a firm hand. Strict discipline was administered. We experienced academic pride and the pupils were introduced to the arts. For example, they participated at many eisteddfods whether it was singing, poetry, art, or piano playing recitals that were arranged by the Witwatersrand Eisteddfod Society.

I remember teachers like Juffrou Violet Fortuin, Mr De Sousa, Meneer Jim Abrams, Mr Baatjies, George Pullen, and Mac Hero. There was also Arthur Hare, our English teacher, who was a gentleman and an accomplished music teacher and conductor. We won gold certificates at the Witwatersrand Eisteddfods for choral singing each

year and participated in the finals held at the City Hall in Johannesburg. These were indeed carefree, memorable, momentous and happy times.

The Transhaven Seaside Fund was a non-governmental organisation that was committed to granting indigent children an educational excursion to the Transhaven Home in The Bluff in Durban. Each year a few children from the school were included in these excursions. Mr Frank Jacobs was one of the lead organisers. There was also a fundraising debutante ball. My sister Lynette came second at the first Debutante Ball, having collected the second-most funds.

In 1960 the school moved to a bigger white brick building opposite the Robert Strachan Hostel. The education department then introduced Standards 6 to 8 at this school, where the Indian children joined the classes given in English. More teachers were appointed. We had teachers including John Wathen and his brother David, Gerald Samaai, Mr Pailman, Mr Volkwyn, Mr Moodley and Mrs Fredericks, and the system changed to subject teaching. In my Standard 8 year the school had a prefect system, and I was chosen as the Head Prefect from among the girls. The school then changed its name to Germiston Coloured Class II School.

We had beautiful, special memories of Germiston and our excellent teachers, which we shared with families who cherished big dreams and hopes for their children.

The big move…

We had several encounters with the apartheid government at times. One of these was the forced removal from Germiston. First all the 'Black' residents had to move to Thokoza. The community in the Cape Stands had to move lower down in Germiston to the area vacated by the Black families. After three years the Great Trek started to Reiger Park, in Boksburg, and some of the families later relocated to Eden Park in Alberton. The Indian community moved to Actonville in Benoni and later to Palm Ridge in Alberton. It was indeed a very sad and sombre time in our lives. People and our friends who had lived there for most of their lives, and with whom we formed a strong bond, had to end a beautiful era of togetherness, safety and bonding that had been part of our development and sense of belonging. The Peters family, who had stayed in our yard since very early in the 1950s, were moved to Eden Park. It was indeed a very, very sad day in our lives as they had been part of our family since we were young.

Off to Reiger Park

One day in 1962 we all went for a drive to have a look at the foundations of our house in Petunia Street in Reiger Park. There were no other houses around. My sister and brother-in-law had their house built obliquely opposite our house, and from where we stood in our yard, we could see the East Rand Station in the distance. The foundations of Reiger Park Primary had also been laid by this time as this school was to be opened the following year.

There were people staying about three to four kilometres away who had moved from State Mines, Benoni, Germiston, Brakpan and Springs. It was a wonderfully strange, new, and exciting experience. For the first time we had a bathroom, toilets, running water, a shower in the back room, and even a fireplace in our house. A fence enclosed a beautiful garden in front of our own house. I remember the day vividly when my father dropped me there one morning in 1963, when I was in Standard 9, and I had to wait and sign for a few new pieces of furniture to be delivered.

As time went by, we met new friends and new acquaintances. People were also moving in from Actonville in Benoni, Brakpan, Edenvale, Springs, Alexandra township, Herschel, Port Elizabeth, and the surrounding areas. It must have been a culture shock for the elderly folk. We met the new communities mostly in churches and the schools in Reiger Park.

As the communities moved in and houses popped up everywhere, we were amused by the

creativity, originality, and sense of humour of the people who named the sub-areas: Little Germiston, Popcorn Valley, Hier-en-daar and Excuse me. Each name had an appropriate reason for the names they 'officially' were known by much to the delight of us all. Obviously, with the creativity and sense of humour there were two areas, Hier-en-daar en MM (Ma se moer), that had very descriptive names which explained the environment and the rich, colourful language the people spoke. The people were indeed very friendly and there was a beautiful camaraderie among the people staying in Reiger Park. We were introduced to new traditions and made new friends.

A new vibe and lust for life existed among the young folk. We met new neighbours and children, made friends at school, went to the Wesley Guild, a youth group, church groups and we started hockey clubs. I must acknowledge that meeting new acquaintances opened opportunities to new institutions, sporting skills, educational opportunities, skills, and traditions. There were also instances of gang fights as they claimed their 'turf', and drugs were rife among the communities. I am sure the police had a busy time bringing peace and order to this area.

St Anthony's Education Centre

St Anthony's – a Catholic institution – opened its doors to adult learners in 1966. Father Stan Brennan played a pivotal role in offering adult matric and skill training classes to many people in Reiger Park, the East Rand and adjacent areas. Different workshops were also presented. My brother Vivian and I were part of the 15 teachers chosen by the Transvaal Teachers' Conference to attend French Classes in their newly found, highly sophisticated Language Laboratory at St Anthony's. The lessons were indeed very educational and enjoyable, and did we become *au fait* in communicating in this rich Romance language. We were totally thrilled with the high-level technology. *Nous avons apprecie cela a fond*, we thoroughly appreciated this. We attended these classes for three years, until I relocated to Cape Town. There was also a music improvisation course presented to teachers at this centre which I attended. This institution was indeed a learning centre par excellence! ABET classes were presented and I am not sure what percentage of students hailed from Reiger Park over the years.

Mac-Alfred Hero

Mac-Alfred Hero, who hailed from Lichtenburg, moved to Germiston in the late 1950s. After the death of their parents, he was also the father figure for his siblings when they moved from Lichtenburg. He started his teaching career at Germiston Primary and boarded with the Hansrod family.

He was fit, health conscious, and an ardent sports person and tennis player. He played competitively against all the great names like David Samaai and Ossie Woodman in tennis in South Africa then. He was also an ardent soccer player. He played for Pirates Soccer Club. Mac's brother, Betheul, and sister Caroline participated with great success in different athletic track events representing schools and colleges. They were determined and committed sports enthusiasts.

He taught History to the Standard 5 to 8 classes at Germiston Primary which later became Germiston Coloured Class II School. In 1961 he married my eldest sister, Rhoda, and they have 5 children: Ursula, Merle, Jo-Anne, Beryl and Dalmain.

In 1962 Mac was appointed as Principal of the Wierda Reformed School for Boys, one of the Special Schools introduced by the Department of Coloured Education in Irene, Pretoria. Mac, Rhoda, and a few teachers taught at this school. Mac and Rhoda also served as the House Master and Matron of this school with a small staff. He was later appointed as Principal of the Thokoza Primary School in Thokoza before his death in 1973.

Vivian Solomons

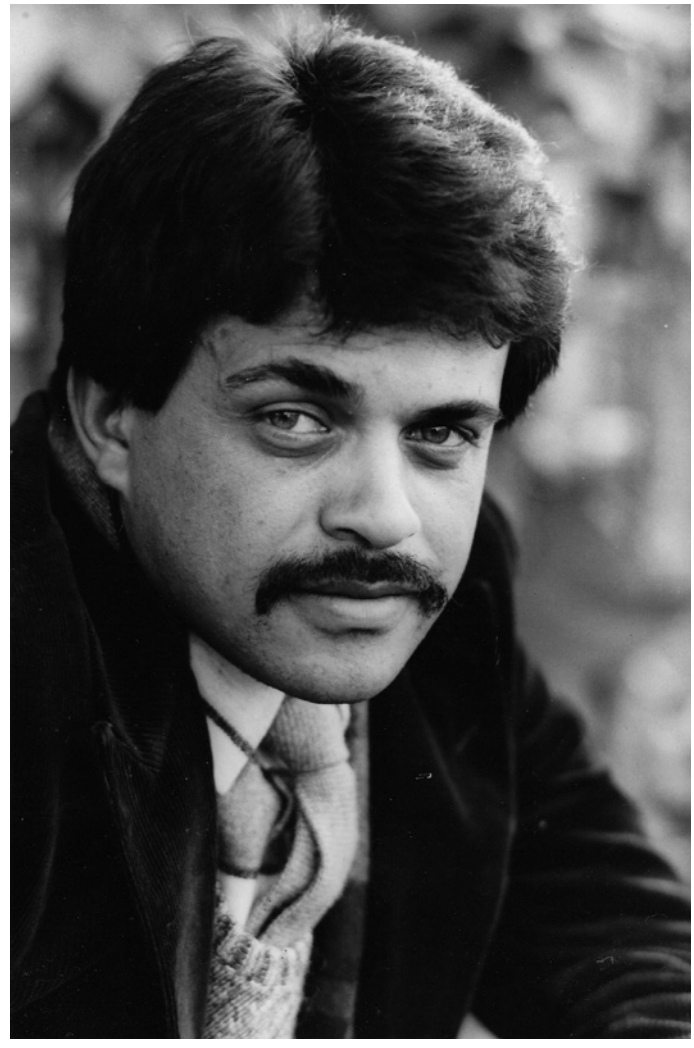
Five years after I was born, Vivian arrived. I cannot remember him for the first two years of his life,

but I do remember that he was from an early age the performer, singer and dancer of the family. Sometimes with my jealous sibling competitiveness I knew that he was just 'showing off'. Fortunately, I grew out of this, although the competitiveness continued into adolescent life. There was a great bond between us and a very good sense of sibling rivalry. Vivian excelled at school and was extremely successful academically. Like all of us, Vivian also attended the Methodist Church in Germiston and Reiger Park. He was also the Sunday School Superintendent and the Wesley Guild Leader.

He started planning weekend youth camps. At the youth group at our church we were introduced to all new skills and adventure. He bought a boat somewhere and this boat went with on these youth camps. The area at the Vaal Dam was rough and not maintained, with no water at times. We used water from the dam to cook and wash but we had sheer fun, adventure, and great experience in life skills at these camps.

Then the Adventure Club was formed when he started to teach at Oosrand High. He specialised in Physical Education at Hewat Teachers' Training College and later lectured at the Rand College of Education. His main purpose and focus were on youth development, at first with boys only. A group of boys in his class started this group. One of the girls who was in the programme years ago, my niece, Ursula Hero, shared with me how they were put through a tough routine of assessment one Saturday at Cinderella Dam. They were put through a circuit training session, and if they made it the girls would then be allowed to join this group. They were welcomed with great zest and could then officially have tracksuits and were very proud to be part of this formidable team.

There were weekend camps, relay races, variety concerts, displays and in between they were exposed to life skills activities, camps, and circuit training sessions. It was indeed wonderful that the boys and girls in Reiger Park could experience these

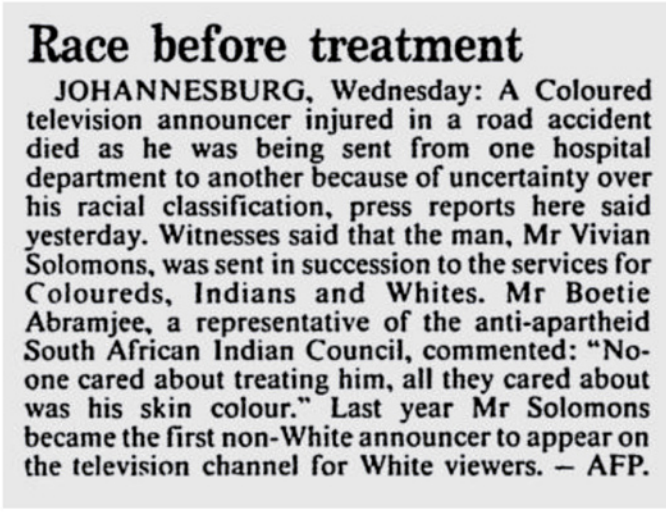


Vivian Solomons (Solomons collection).

youth outreach programmes. My brother and I also took part in a partner work gymnastics display at these presentations.

One of the highly successful leaders and entrepreneurs, Ockert Fransch, a previous Adventure Club member, wrote the following:

> The Adventure club was started by our friend and teacher Vivian Solomons and a few teenagers from Reiger Park. The aim was to informally engage teenagers in physical activities that were fun. We met on Friday afternoons, went for a run, and did some physical exercises. The ethos was always to



Race before treatment

JOHANNESBURG, Wednesday: A Coloured television announcer injured in a road accident died as he was being sent from one hospital department to another because of uncertainty over his racial classification, press reports here said yesterday. Witnesses said that the man, Mr Vivian Solomons, was sent in succession to the services for Coloureds, Indians and Whites. Mr Boetie Abramjee, a representative of the anti-apartheid South African Indian Council, commented: "No-one cared about treating him, all they cared about was his skin colour." Last year Mr Solomons became the first non-White announcer to appear on the television channel for White viewers. — AFP.

International reporting on the death of Vivian Solomons (*Sydney Morning Herald*, April 1984).

> have fun. The activities were expanded by Vivian to formal gymnastics, hikes, as well as exposing young persons to leadership opportunities. Being part of the Adventure Club was great fun and contributed to my lifelong love for physical exercise. It was such an honour to have Vivian as a friend and mentor in my life. I remember his eternal smiling face and jesting with great fondness. Vivian was such an incredible person with such energy for life, joy and fun and he loved giving so much of his time to us.

Vivian was interested in the arts and his friendship and mentorship started with the highly seasoned actor and director Louis van Niekerk. They auditioned for Adam Small's play *Kanna hy kô hystoe*. They were mentored by Sandra Prinsloo and Marius Weyers under the directorship of Johan Blignaut. This group was active and was known as the former Corsair group. I still remember names like Henry Jeffreys, Berenice Few, Ursula Hero and Leslie Fong, who were the first actors in this play. The reviews were great, and they raved about these actors who presented this play with much pomp and professionalism. Thereafter Vivian was introduced to and appeared opposite seasoned actors like Wilma Stockenström and Wilson Dunster in *Die Wilde Man* at the Market Theatre. His name was on everyone's lips in the world of drama and theatre. At the Rand College of Education, he entered his students into the National College Drama Competition with the play *Die Wonderwerk*.

Vivian went through a tough auditioning programme with the introduction of people of colour as continuity announcers by the SABC and was chosen to be the first continuity announcer of colour. On the day of his first appearance on television the Education Department informed him that he would not be allowed to participate as teachers were not allowed to receive two salary cheques. After a letter written to the Head of Education that same day, he was allowed to continue, after confirming that he would donate the meagre stipend to the community. He started that same evening.

At the schools that I visited people wanted to know more about him. He had a fan club of old and young from the four corners of South Africa. He was showcased in magazines, interviews and excelled in what he did and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Then 13 April 1984 happened.

This was what happened as explained in court: a driver of a concrete mixer did not 'see' the white government car Vivian drove on his way home and took a sudden turn in front of him. The car landed underneath the revolving drum and was crushed.

Vivian passed away at Klerkdorp Hospital, where the medical staff were not sure of his identity.

Doreen Solomons

I completed my matric year at William Hills High School and attended the Rand College of Education for two years. The change from student to teacher was natural as I had already started living my passion by being a Sunday School teacher.

I started my teaching career at Germiston Primary School, teaching Sub A pupils. What an enjoyable 'back to my roots' effort that was. I was back at the school where I received my

KOMMENTAAR

Deur Conrad Sidego

Hoe lank nog vernedering?

AS jy uiters diplomaties kommentaar wil lewer op die omstandighede waarin Vivian Solomons verlede week gesterf het, kan mens sê: dit was uiters ongelukkige omstandighede.

Waar lê die **ongeluk** nou in hierdie **ongelukkigheid** en is dit maar net die blote **omstandighede?**

NEE. Dis geen **ongeluk** nie. Ons land is so behep en bevange met ras en kleur dat daar selfs nog in 'n stryd wanneer 'n lewe gered moet word, allereers geskarrel moet word om 'n mens se ras vas te stel.

Dis nie blote omstandighede wat dit veroorsaak nie: dis **wette.** Wette met dié ingeboude kleurbevangenheid en vooroordele wat sorg vir vernederende voorvalle wat so dikwels en so maklik die internasionale pers haal, en ons hier te lande se beheersdheid en matigheid tot die ergste toe beproef het – en steeds beproef.

Keer op keer

Dis dan ook die "omstandigheid" waarin Vivian Solomons se gees onse aarde verlaat het.

So ironies. Met sy aanstelling as Televisie-aankondiger het hy as 't ware in hierdie apartheidsland van ons deur die kleurgrens gebreek. Maar helaas. Daardie einste apartheid het hom in die kritiekste oomblikke van sy lewe ingehaal . . .

Sy gesin wil in hierdie oomblikke van seerheid nie "moeilikheid" daaroor maak nie.

Ons verstaan dit, maar kan ons bekostig om herhaalde "ongelukkighede" so te laat gebeur – keer op keer op keer . . .?

Vivian is nie die eerste nie, en met die herhaalde weersinwekkende onverskilligheid teenoor ons menswaardigheid sal dit ook nie laaste wees nie.

• Hoe lank nog kan beskaafde mense aanskou en toelaat dat ander beskaafde mense so gekrenk en vernedder word?

An editorial comment by Conrad Sidego, the editor of *Rapport-Ekstra* (*Rapport-Ekstra*, April 1984).

basic education and enjoyed every minute of it. I applied for study leave and in 1971 I completed a specialisation course in Physical Education at Hewat Teachers' Training College in Athlone, Cape Town. It was the only institution where I could specialise. I returned to Germiston Primary and a year later I taught at Oosrand High School for six months before lecturing at the Rand College of Education at Crown Mines in 1972. That year I applied to start a specialisation course in Physical Education for Ladies and so, in 1973, we started a Physical Education component, the first ever at the Rand College of Education.

My development in education was an absolute dream. Opportunities appeared one after another. In 1976 I applied for the inspectress post in Physical Education (Girls) based at the Wynberg office in Cape Town. I completed my BA at Unisa in 1981.

In 1982 I started a group of Physical Education specialists from 20 different areas in the Western Cape. We introduced national dance (folk dancing) and group gymnastics, with the South African Gymnastics Federation, as part of the extracurricular school programme. We continued with the National Dance programme until 2019, before the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns were introduced.

In 1989 I completed a very, very challenging examination and obtained the Licentiate in National Dance at the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing at the Head Office in Kings Cross, London in the United Kingdom. I completed my Bachelor of Education (Honours Degree) at the University of the Western Cape in 1991.

In 1991 I was appointed as Senior Curriculum Adviser and two years after that I became the Senior Curriculum Planner at the Western Cape Education Department. In the meantime, Physical Education was absorbed with Life Skills, Personal and Social Development, Career Education, Study Skills, Democracy and Human Rights into the subject now known as Life Orientation. I was part of a group of Subject Advisers who literally trained thousands of teachers across South Africa to teach this 'new' subject.

Doreen Solomons (Solomons collection).

In 2007 I retired, having gained 40 years' experience in education. The day I retired I was requested by the Director in General Education and Training (GET) Curriculum at the Department of Education in Pretoria to assist as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist in Life Orientation at the national department in Pretoria for three months, which was then extended to a year. The following year I arranged an International Congress at Stellenbosch University (over four years) with Alrine Rodgers, who did the administrative planning, and a formidable team of lecturers, curriculum advisers and teachers who assisted with the logistics to welcome the 200 members from 20 different countries who attended.

After that I still assisted for three years in substituting for curriculum advisers who had been promoted. I then also assisted with Whole School Development Assessments for a further three years until I finally retired at the age of 70. Currently, I am involved in the Methodist Church of South Africa, the Cape of Good Hope Synod, Bellville Circuit, and the Bellville South Society with several programmes, specifically in the Education and Care Mission, going back to the mission and purpose that my father had.

I served on several sport organisations, was on the executive of the South African Gymnastics Federation (SAGF), Women and Sport South Africa, and served as president of the United School Sports Association of South Africa (USSASA) Gymnastics for three years. I travelled extensively representing these organisations, as manager of SAGF teams for three years. I attended an international seminar in Japan and choreographed dances from Gymnaestrada groups in Germany, Portugal, and Dornbirn in Austria.

In 1982 I was appointed as a member of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), representing South Africa/Africa. I served on this body for ten years. IAPESGW meetings and congresses took place all over the world. I attended meetings in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Buenos Aires in Argentina, Atlanta in the USA, London in England, Alexandria in Egypt, Edmonton in Canada, Thessaloniki and Athens in Greece, Melbourne in Australia, and Switzerland. I stepped down as the Vice President of this association when I retired in 2007.

I received various acknowledgements for women in sport from SAGF, the National Sport Committee, was a runner- up for the Checkers/Shoprite Women in Sport Award, and the teacher group I was part of that presented a lecture demonstration in Edmonton received the coveted prize for the best dance performance. I also received a nomination for Sport Legends and became an honorary member of IAPESGW, the highest award for Women in Sport, Physical Education and Dance.

Finally…

Reiger Park has many possibilities. The population will expand, and the sand dunes will accordingly be removed. I am not sure what difficulties there are currently with the shortage of necessary skills and what challenges the people may face. I have noticed that St Anthony's still offers opportunities to equip students with practical skills that would help them to be productive in society. They also extend opportunities for job creation and facilitate social change among the vulnerable youth.

As far as sport is concerned, I had discussions with Leonard Plaatjies, the current Sport Administrator, and an active aerobic coach in Reiger Park. It is clear, that among the schools as well as the public, there is a lack of interest and commitment in general in fostering sport. I am fully aware of the major challenges that all teachers face. The prescribed quarterly guideline within each curriculum has been merged and they need to complete the work in an adapted time frame. Their time is indeed restricted.

However, there are two hockey clubs and they do not receive any funding for their development. They play competitively against teams from Benoni. There is no sign of games like softball, baseball, netball, volleyball, gymnastics, cricket, athletics, or rugby. The 39 345 people in Reiger Park, according to the 2011 census, currently require dedicated, focused, and trained people as well as well-planned and continuous motivational programmes. A three to five-year plan should be drawn up and envisage what sport will look like in Reiger Park. There are definitely different ways to combat this lack of interest, non-compliant, unresponsive, and unconcerned attitude toward sport.

One example is reaching out to the retired sportsmen and women in the Reiger Park community and get interested younger people in touch with them and allow these former icons to show them the way.

Reach out to the four primary and two high schools; get the schools' programmes going in these areas and start building a sports culture and just maybe in eight years we might have Olympians represented from Reiger Park at the 2028 games.

I am indeed appreciative of everyone who has made an impact on my life whether it be my parents, in our family home, at church, or on the sport field. I am indebted to those who encouraged me at my basketball, netball, or hockey matches; those who supported our Sunday School Choir in Germiston or planning a Sunday School anniversary; the language tutors and teachers who facilitated the French lessons at St Anthony's, and my first practical teaching lesson at Goede Hoop Primary School. I am thinking of those who made the first lesson at the swimming pool in Reiger Park possible. When coaching the Standard 6s of Oosrand High I collected 20 old tyre tubes from the taxi rank opposite the former high school which I used as improvised physical education equipment, since there were no apparatuses. I am also grateful to family members and friends who have gone before and to my Standard 4 teacher, Mr Jim Abrams, who is still alive. I am thankful for the life I shared with all of them and the experiences I have had. These were all building blocks that formed my life; they are part of my being and helped form the person I am today.

Even though situations, times and life have changed over the years, our friendship, love, and care are still the same as before. The title of one of the dances I choreographed for a group of teachers for a Gymnaestrada in Dornbirn in Austria expresses it all: *Viva la vida al maximo. Live life to its full.*

God bless.

12 September 2021

36

My early life – growing up in Stirtonville

Albert Victor Links

I was born in the old Stirtonville township in May 1959 at 688 Mabuya Street. I am the sixth of 11 children, comprising seven sisters and four brothers. Three of my sisters, Minnie, Irene and Lettie, my father Peter William and my mother Catherine are deceased. My paternal grandfather, Albert Links, was of mixed descent. He apparently changed his population classification in order to serve in the army. He was said to hail from Bechuanaland (Botswana) and known to be of Nama origin. My paternal grandmother, Annie Katrina Jansen, was from Skotipolla, Potchefstroom, where there was a big army base. My grandfather did a stint at this army base, which is how they met.

My paternal grandfather served in the South African Army under the British Crown, including international army engagements during World War II. He served in regions such as Egypt, the North African desert and Abyssinia (Ethiopia). I have some of my grandfather's medals, including the Africa Cross that was bestowed on him. Promises to soldiers of receiving farms on their return never materialised; instead they were awarded bicycles and a pension.

The South African Army refurbished the Ethiopian rail network in 1945 for ease of logistics for artillery and soldiers. I have my grandfather's marriage certificate that indicated his job as a platelayer or rail track layer. During World War II Italian prisoners of war were brought to South Africa. The facility at Esselen Park, Kempton Park, was built by these POWs.

My maternal grandfather Martiens Edwards was also of mixed descent. My maternal grandmother, Minnie Alexander, was born from a bloodline of slaves that were brought from Indonesia and other eastern countries under the slave trade of the Dutch East India Company. She apparently hailed from Natal where her parents worked on the sugar cane fields and as domestic servants. Two children were born out of their union, namely Thomas and Catherine, my mother. My uncle Thomas was also in the army on local duty. He guarded Italian POWs

at Esselen Park as part of his deployment, as well as prisoners at Zonderwater prison.

During the gold rush many families moved to Johannesburg and lived in Actonville in an area known as Cape Stands. Years later the Alexander families relocated and established themselves in Cape Town. Many of the elders of these families were born in the old Transvaal and lived in Cape Stands in Actonville, Benoni. I have the birth certificate of my mom's uncle, John Alexander, stating that he was born in Benoni. These families descended from the bloodline of slaves that were brought from Indonesia and other islands in the region. When visiting Jakarta, Indonesia, during 2016-17, I could not help but feel a strong affinity to it. It is therefore not uncommon to find the old colonial classifications of Cape Malay at the time and they are still referred to today. The slaves established Islam as their religion.

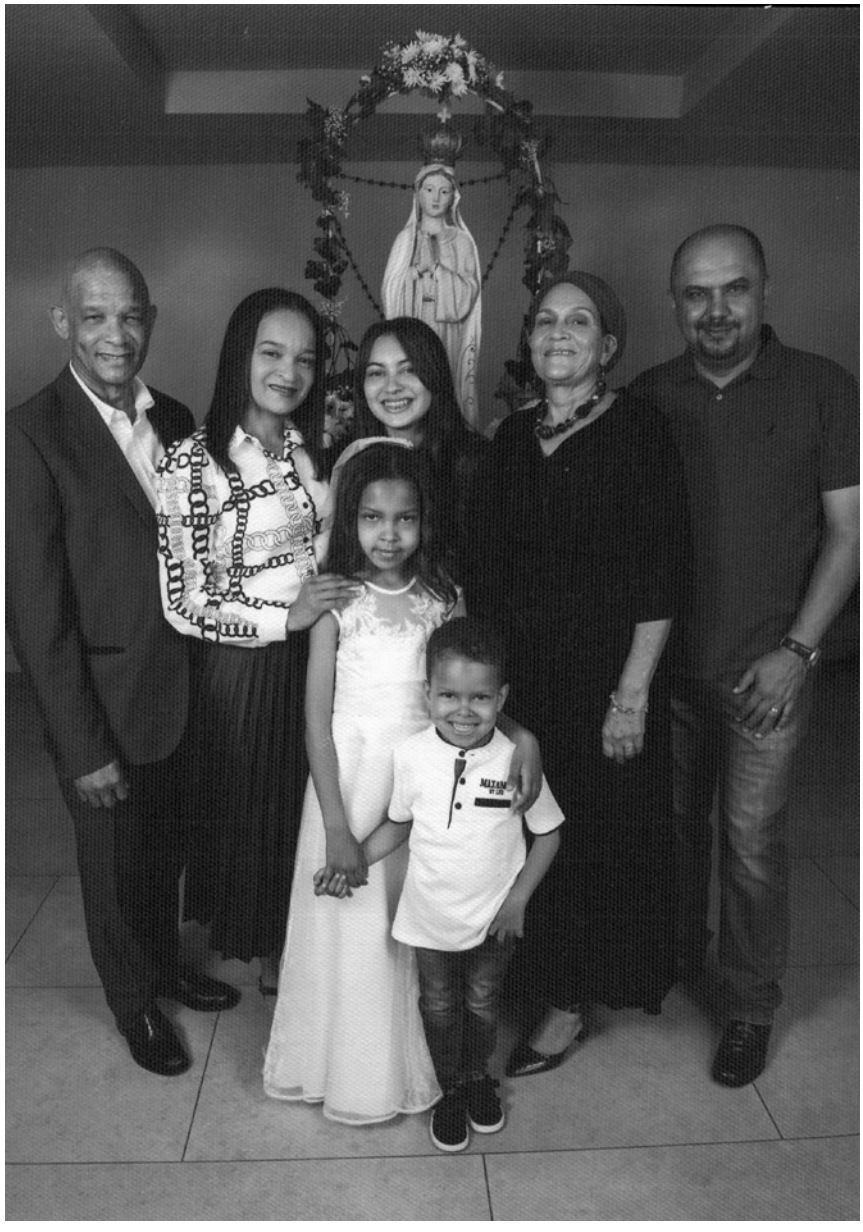
I was born at a time when the Group Areas Act of 1950 was enforced. As a child I witnessed the brutality of the Act as our neighbours were uprooted and relocated to Vergenoeg (Vosloorus). My father died in 1963 when I was four years old. My father was regarded as well-educated as he completed Standard 8. During those years, you could teach with that qualification. He was also well-spoken and had a great command of the English language. My father and grandfather worked at the well-known pharmaceutical manufacturer, B. Owen Jones, aka Lennon, in Boksburg. He was responsible for producing talcum powder and other products. He subsequently went to work at the Government laundry on Cason Road, Boksburg, that still exists today. I recall that it was said that he earned 1 pound 10, the equivalent of R3 per week. He rose at 03:00 in the morning to light a coal fire, boil water to wash and make that first cup of tea for me as I wanted to see it next to me when I woke up. He regularly walked to work or subsequently he cycled.

My grandfather and father were also very sporty and active. In 1944 my grandfather was the captain and my father a striker of the All Blacks soccer club in Actonville, Benoni and subsequently in Stirtonville. My father once kicked a soccer ball so hard that it broke the wooden crossbar of the goal post. His strong kick was also evident when the goalkeeper would 'catch-and-release' – *bamba yega* – due to the intensity and power when the ball was kicked by my father.. With the resettlements to Stirtonville the club was later renamed Pirates Football Club, and it still existed until a few years ago. Many well-known families participated in this soccer team, including in the administration of it.

My mother battled to obtain a welfare grant for us and eventually managed to receive it after a long battle and through the mercy of God. My eldest brother, Albert Benjamin, had to start working at the age of 15 as my father was seriously ill for a number of years before his death. My eldest sister Minnie and the second eldest, Ann Irene, subsequently joined the workforce as well to help the family through this struggle. There was lots of drama involved in renewing the welfare grant every year, and our own people as welfare officers tried their best to have this grant stopped. My mother was so strong, she persisted and managed to feed us every day. Up to today I don't know how she did it. It was miraculous and through grace.

My father was very dark in complexion and not allowed to purchase alcohol at the local bottle store. He had to ask a light-skinned person to purchase on his behalf. Stock was limited and a counter book was kept to record all purchases. This was embarrassing for my father and he often settled for a home-brewed alcoholic beverage at the local shebeen known as N5. It is evident that this kind of enforcement encouraged the development of shebeens.

Our house was a two-room dwelling. It had no electricity and a communal toilet with a shower and tap outside. My grandparents and parents raised their families on Christian principles. My father and maternal grandmother brought us up



The Links family: Front: Gianna Bussack and Eli Bussack. Back: Albert Links, Ermine Bussack, Karley Bussack, Merchia Links and Leon Bussack (Links collection).

in the Anglican Church. We regularly attended a weekday evening mass and Sunday mass. My father regularly made us practise hymns and we had to get our respective participating voices and notes correct. He was also a strict disciplinarian. I recall a monthly routine beating with a leather belt to keep all of us on the straight and narrow. I was lucky and always escaped this as the 'blue-eyed boy' of the family.

Goede Hoop School was about 100 metres from our house, and I completed my primary school there. The principal was Mr John Collins (Oom Tiet). His deputy was Mr Alexander Hood, and some of the teachers I can remember were Messrs Du Preez, Felix, Kubie, Joseph Balance, Alec Jooste, Cyprian Andrews, James Busby, Johnny Bussack, William Barnes, Olifant, Chequenton, and Victor Weimers. I had a ball of a time at this school and maintained first place in my grade for the entire seven years at primary school. I also spent a number of years attending afternoon sessions due to limited classroom capacity. During my Standard 3 year we won the eisteddfod singing competition held in the Coronationville Hall. My school bag was either a paper bag or the well-known Checkers plastic bag. Home lighting was by candlelight and self-made paraffin lamps; energy and warmth were provided by a *mbowla*, a tin with holes in it, and a Welcome Dover coal stove. School shorts were made using a mealie meal bag with the lettering bleached out.

I spent my entire high school career at Oosrand at the time when Mr John Wathen was principal. His deputy was Mr WJ Filander, who later obtained his PhD through Unisa. The teachers were Messrs Ernest Usher, Vincent Opperman, Phillip Oosthuizen, Gibson Ash, Raymond Campbell, Petersen, Franks, Rodney Veldman, Attlee Clements,

Jordaan (Jorrie), Tom Webb, David (Davie) Wathen, Barry Clarke, Oscar Sithole, Owen Magardie, Tyron Samson, Winston Milton, Andrew le Roux (Nieto) and Cravin Collis, and Mesdames Ermyn-Trude September (Garson), Joan Lyle, Hanna Wathen, Alma de Jager (Schoeman), and Vivienne van der Water (Pennington).

My high school years were great, with lots of academic competition and outstanding teaching staff. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at this school. A sincere thank you and note of appreciation to all our teachers, primary and high school, that educated us under trying circumstances and continued to do their best. Our group of students was the first guinea pigs to be taught a new school syllabus that offered different streams and at higher and standard grade. During 1976 and 1977 a number of white teachers joined the staff including Dr Chesler. I was part of a group that boycotted the white teachers, except Dr Chesler's classes. We learnt that the white teachers were paid an 'inconvenience allowance' for sharing facilities with Black teachers. Dr Chesler did not use the staff facilities and apparently refused the allowance. The boycott of the white teachers by a group of us attracted the attention of the special branch of the police, at the time known as the Bureau of State Security (BOSS).

The old Stirtonville consisted of a number of smaller areas, among them the Single Quarters, the Doubles, and Jerusalem. Some of the fortunate families had 'stand houses'. Those who had this privilege were typically soldiers that served in the army, businessmen, teachers and some mineworkers. In between were two-room developments. Galeview, made up of concrete cast matchbox houses, was located further to the east. Rotary Street, west of and parallel to the current Leon Ferreira Street, was the 'border' between Galeview and the area west of it, i.e., Stirtonville. Rotary Street was also where the Indian and two Chinese families had their shops. The street names that I recall are Mabuya, Moloto, Mpendu, Mgilane, Mokgaku, Masilela, Maubane, Molephe, to mention but a few.

Most of the churches were situated along Church Street, a remnant of which still exists in the Doubles today. The Methodist Church was opposite Goede Hoop Primary School and the Catholic Church was in its current location, but much smaller than the giant estate that is visible today. The old Civic Centre, currently St Anthony's Parish Hall, used to be the beer hall for mineworkers and locals. Beer, commonly referred to as *bar bier* was brewed there in a giant tank. The library was first at the old post office, roughly where the current post office is, and subsequently moved to the small hall at the old High School that is currently Drommedaris Primary School. A library was also subsequently established at the current Civic Centre. Some schools have their own libraries and so does the Catholic Church.

Public transport consisted of a fleet of light green and light yellow buses owned by Boksburg Municipality. The Public Utility Transport Company (PUTCO) provided transport to Vosloorus and those buses were painted a different colour, pretty much like some of them are still today. The route of the local buses was basically Boksburg town, East Rand Station, then into Rotary Street (Stirtonville), Thompson Street (aka Clarence September Street), then Williams Street to the main bus rank that was situated on the corner of current-day Gerry Oberholzer Street and then back down Rotary Street to complete the route.

The Indian and Chinese traders owned most of the shops. One Chinese family operated the fafi business. In Boksburg town there were larger retailers and banks such as Checkers, OK, Sales House, Standard Bank and Barclays Bank, as well as building societies such as NBS and PERM. Shops at the old Civic Beer Hall were owned by resettled traders such as Messrs Cochrane, David Fransch, and Mohamed.

Danny Cassell, Pres Nelson Mandela and Albert Links (Links collection).

The sports field (today WJ Clements Stadium) provided for the soccer, basketball and tennis needs, although it was a much smaller facility than it is today. The other social needs, such as movies and dancing, were accommodated in school classrooms, people's homes for dance sessions, etc. until the old civic beer hall was converted into a community hall where bioscope/movies, dances and other events could be held. Many residents also frequented the Davey Social Centre in Benoni and Shereno Club (Shereno printers). The Catholic Church in Reiger Park stepped up to the plate to provide entertainment in the form of halls, sports facilities, etc.

I grew up in a household that was politically left-aligned, and the underground movement was closely followed and supported. Mrs M Moodley and Mr GK du Plessis were household names among my family and friends. Our political engagements were all fairly hush-hush as all political related activities were monitored by government spies and allies that could result in people being charged and placed under house arrest or jailed. The political debates focused strongly on housing issues, jobs, equal rights and improving the lives of people.

The year 1969 witnessed the advent of the government sponsored and instigated Federal Party. We also experienced a mass influx of government-aligned people from other areas to neutralise the leftists and to secure the vote for the apartheid collaborators. Segregated structures were implemented from municipal to national levels, e.g., the Coloured Representative Council (CRC) and others too numerous to recall and that I was not interested in. I remember the 1988 segregated Tricameral Parliament elections returned a poll of about 4% due to campaigns against it, mainly driven by activists and organisations aligned to the United Democratic Front (UDF), ratepayers associations, individuals, and the banned African National Congress (ANC). However, people were still purporting to represent people of colour in these apartheid structures.

The forced removals were very unsettling and traumatic for my extended family as they uprooted and split many families due to classifications based on hair, complexion and looks. It indeed took time to get used to one another after relocating and to build a new community. Certain perceived differences and a territorial attitude soon resulted in fights, arguments, and various gangs. Of course there was the positive side of various parts of

the 'new' community coming together in harmony. You can imagine the difficulty in re-establishing communities. The integration into various schools, churches and other social structures had to be rebuilt from scratch. I am convinced that my family, and many others, would have opted to stay in Actonville or some of the other places where they originally lived. At the start of the forced removals some of my family members moved to Cape Town, some to Durban and others to Botswana.

Over the years gangsterism and crime haunted the community. My family was fortunate that these social ills never directly impacted us, but nevertheless we were and still are exposed to potential harm. Not many people can afford to leave Reiger Park to live in the suburbs or gated communities. I still don't fathom forming and belonging to a gang, especially with the intent of causing harm to others. Many academics have researched the problem of gangsterism to try and suggest solutions to this socioeconomic dilemma facing our society. Greed, drugs, alcohol, protection, survival, and misuse/abuse remain feeders of this social ill. If these underlying feeder problems could be dealt with, it might reduce this scourge in our community. We are confronted with mass unemployment, an unequal society, and a growing population that includes many undocumented migrants. Competition for resources and access to very limited opportunities exacerbate the social evils. Law enforcement agencies and the community must do their bit not to feed these demons.

The 1981 riot was triggered by greed, dominance, manipulation and abuse of the system in favour of certain businesses and families. It started fairly innocently when owners of competing taxis wanted their fair share of the market and to be allowed access at the taxi rank facilities. The owner of the largest taxi fleet denied competing taxi owners equal access to the taxi rank (i.e., being part of the same queue) at the East Rand Station. It ended up where competing taxis formed their own queue and commuters had to choose which one to use. This meant that commuters had to be enticed to use one queue or the other, and this ended up in arguments and fights. The dominant player then reduced the standard (uniform) fare from ten to five cents and commuters flocked to support his taxis. This soon turned into a fight. Things turned ugly when a female community leader was slapped in the face and cayenne pepper thrown into her eyes. The fight then spread to the township. Young activists joined the adults in this foray and the focus soon turned to the issue of housing shortages, economic access, and general gripes about how our people were treated by the dominant business people at the time.

I have mixed feelings when reference is made to 'progress over the years' in Reiger Park, but we can consider and note the following: (i) Housing developed in dribs and drabs. We saw the development of areas like Fast Move, MM, Hier-en-Daar, the Flats, Maseru, Excuse Me and Popcorn Valley. Facilities included the Civic Centre, a dilapidated shopping centre, a swimming pool, and a satellite police station; (ii) A housing list of more than 10 000, and growing, with backyard dwellers ever increasing; (iii) Cosmetic changes were made to Goede Hoop Primary, Reiger Park Primary and Drommedaris Primary Schools; (iv) Oosrand Secondary School moved into new buildings a few years ago, an improvement on the old asbestos school building; (v) The refurbishment of the flats to deal with safety risks is still not properly attended to; (vi) The Integrated Development Plan (IDP) for Reiger Park is allocated a very small budget and there are no meaningful large capital projects; (vii) The current multibillion rand Leeuwpoort Project will see some investments in Reiger Park; (viii) The hub development at the Civic Centre.

There are otherwise no real impactful projects that can be regarded as highly beneficial to the community and the prospects are rather depressing.

We can only wait to see what will happen with the new housing development and the allocation of houses as Reiger Park residents are short-changed all the time.

The 1950s to early 1970s was dominated by the enforcement of apartheid laws and regulations and this was done with impunity by the White regime and its collaborators in the community. I recall that the entire Stirtonville was fenced in, with gates. The police screened all visitors, including relatives. Anyone who did not have a permit or who was not included in the file of the Stirtonville inhabitants could not enter without permission. In the event that a person was found at your house during the early morning hours, normally between 02:00 and 04:00, he or she would be arrested, your file would be updated with this offence and a fine would have to be paid. The racially mixed nature of our families meant that some relatives and acquaintances were not allowed to visit and/or stay overnight without a pre-approved permit.

I also recall my exposure to Uncle George du Plessis, who took many of us under his wing in the Ratepayers Association and the UDF during 1984-85. There was the successful Save Boksburg campaign of 1989, under the leadership of our community leaders, against the white Conservative Party that re-introduced petty apartheid. This campaign also paved the way for the establishment of the local ANC branch as soon as the organisation was unbanned the following year. The Boksburg Council bestowed the Freedom of Boksburg on Nelson Mandela during 1997. The Save Boksburg campaign meetings attracted political leaders like Jesse Duarte, Jay Naidoo, Achmat Kathrada, Walter Sisulu, Popo Molefe, Tokyo Sexwale, Krish Naidoo and many others. The high-profile nature of the activists and speakers attracted world-wide attention. It was the talk of the town when busloads of people took their buying power to neighbouring towns such as Benoni. The community was determined to bring the Conservative Party in Boksburg to its knees and did so successfully with its slogan "I only buy where I am wanted."

Through the 'no fear attitude' of the local Catholic Priest, Father Stan Brennan, a number of us were exposed to many engaging experiences. He used strategic tactics to deal with the apartheid regime and acted fearlessly, getting away with violating many municipal by-laws. Any such breaches were either overlooked or dealt with by his lawyers. He understood and engaged with the White citizens of Boksburg and he had a very strong faith in God. Father Stan facilitated discussions between Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Féin in Ireland, and Tokyo Sexwale. These two leaders shared their ideas, vision, etc. of the future and learned from each other. I was privileged to be part of that audience and their conversation. Since 1990 Father Stan provided a permanent meeting place at St Anthony's Centre for the local ANC branch. Senior leaders such as Chris Hani, Tokyo Sexwale, Mathews Phosa, Gwede Mantashe and leaders from Cosatu visited the Reiger Park branch. Father Stan and Father Nicolas developed good relationships with foreign embassies, including the American ambassador to South Africa and the Japanese Ambassador. St Anthony's, with the Hani family, annually commemorated the assassination of Chris Hani since 1993.

Some of the local people and leadership that I can recall that had political clout during the 1970s to early 1990s were George du Plessis, Stan Brennan, Mary Moodley, Mahomed Navsa, Ellen Lambert, Alfred Woodington, Danny Cassell, Patrick Dada, Lionel Alvan and Eric van Staade.

In the area of sports the following football clubs stood out for me: All Blacks, Pirates, Crusades, Blackburn Rovers, Pixie, Chelsea and Stoke City. There were many others whose names I cannot recall. Individuals and families who were involved in these clubs were Lyons, Links, Ellis, Johaar, Usher, Magerman, and Van Staade, to name but a few. There also were netball, tennis, hockey and rugby clubs.

Influence of Father Stan

Father Stan, born Seamus Brennan, was a man of God, a visionary, driven by the needs of the community and his vision of the future of a people to be free. He went about his tasks with the basic belief that all people are good and from God.

When Father Stan was called to Stirtonville in 1965 as a young parish priest of the local Catholic Church, in the parish of St Francis Church of Assisi (previously St Albert's), he found an old, small church with no electricity or running water. Father Stan found the remnants of a community that used to be fenced in and had to comply with a strict permit system. The forced removals and settlements by the National Party's apartheid system were fresh in the minds of people. It hurt and the Black communities were suspicious of White people and this is what Father Stan had to heal and deal with.

During the 1970s Reiger Park had three 'Coloured' primary schools: Reiger Park, Drommedaris and Goede Hoop and one high school, Oosrand High. The Catholic Church is renowned for its missionary work and the education of local communities. The local Catholic Church-cum-school therefore was a continuation of such a mission. As a six-year-old in 1965, the year before I started school, my grandmother sometimes took me along to church. My grandmother left the local (old) Anglican Church because they were 'enforcing apartheid' and moved to the Catholic parish because she could still worship in a mixed congregation. I knew Father Stan ever since and literally grew up in front of him. Families such as Ballot, Beckweits, Bridger, Crowie, Daniels, Du Plessis, Felix, Francis, Harris, Hood, Jacobs, Jermaine, Lyons, Miles, Minnaar, Smith and Webb, to name but a few, formed part of a close-knit Catholic family in Reiger Park.

Father Stan would initially do his home visitations on foot and the community soon grew attached to him as he identified the physical, spiritual and social needs of the people in the true spirit of St Francis and St Anthony. The choruses that ring in my mind when thinking of the example Father Stan set are "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brother that you do unto me" and "Great things happen when God mixes with us". He, for instance, noticed how older folk, pensioners, and mothers would spend time at home and thought of something to keep them busy, some meaningful cultural activity to heal people, and to encourage their faith and trust in the Lord. And also to trust him, as a White person, that he did not see colour but the good and God in all people. Father Stan's Franciscan ethos and Godly calling seems to have directed his energy into always doing something positive and constructive in the community.

The East Rand Proprietary Mines (ERPM) gold mining shafts were still active, and a large number of migrant labourers lived in mine hostels (compounds). One of these mine compounds was in close proximity to Stirtonville. Black people were moved to Vosloorus (south of Boksburg) and Stirtonville was reserved for 'Coloured' people. Remnants of a mixed community existed in Kalamazoo (an area near East Rand Station) where some Indian and Chinese families had businesses.

Mineworkers received daily rations, including *mageu*, a drink made with mealie meal and would sometimes sell it to, or use it to barter with the local community. People working on the mines and some of the chemical industries suffered from various occupational related illnesses, including bad coughs and tuberculosis, which were widespread in the area. The social ills in the area included excessive drinking, especially beer that was originally made for the hostel dwellers , mostly mineworkers, and that was then also consumed by the locals. The remnant of the old beer hall (bar) is now part of the St Anthony's Community Hall. Father Stan did 'duty' at the hostels and brought the gospel to those souls. He also buried many of these migrant miners who hailed from countries such as Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho.

The government provided soup and vegetables on a weekly basis at the local clinic and some of the schools had feeding schemes, but it did not last very long. When the government's initiatives, e.g., soup, vegetables, or medication at schools dried up, Father Stan stepped in. He started a soup kitchen with the assistance of a few willing grandmothers and mothers. Later he created an opportunity for senior citizens to meet and socialise at the church, once a week on a Thursday. They would share the Word, talk, socialise with dancing and singing, and some knit and sew. Through the sewing and knitting projects they made jerseys, patch blankets, etc. for those in need, while at the same time the elderly had a good time. Father Stan was there for the community, without asking which church denomination you belonged to as it did not matter to him. The church was growing and the small building was bursting at its seams. Father Stan also managed a 'school' with a small library.

Over time the St Anthony's Centre grew into a massive complex. A Malawian builder called Machine became Father Stan's 'fixer' and Mr Do-it-all. The little church was extended to include a side hall, today the Priest's office, and a library, currently used for catechism classes. Machine also built the tennis courts and did much of the renovations. Most of the projects used volunteers , including the night school that grew from strength to strength with many of our local teachers offering their services free of charge. Later, fundraising efforts slowly became part of life and the congregation moved into action to support Father Stan with all the initiatives for the benefit of the congregation and the community at large.

A karate club, boxing club, gym and tennis court were established. The Catholic Women's League was initiated. For the men of the congregation the St Anthony's Cultural Club was founded. All of these facilities and activities were open to all races, which did not go unnoticed by the National Party government. Father Stan challenged authorities in court on a range of issues, with the help of people like attorney Kramer. With God on his side and the backing of the community the mighty Father Stan took them on and won.

He encouraged the congregation to have cake sales on a Sunday after mass, curry and rice afternoons at home, dancing sessions on a Saturday afternoon at the tennis court and movie screenings over weekends. All of this brought in little bits of money that Father Stan could stretch very far, which made him the miracle worker that could 'print money' and make a plan. He always proclaimed that 'God will provide' and indeed God did. The Franciscan family was always ready and willing to assist. Priests like Father Sylvester, nuns like Sister Gabriel, and monks like Brother Martin, as well as others whose names I have forgotten, left a lasting impression on this congregation and community.

Father Stan would accompany congregation members by bus to the Davey Social Centre in Benoni in support of fundraising efforts. It was here that Father Stan was once caught in the middle of a knife fight and was stabbed. An Irish priest who loved his community so much that he suffered a knife wound to protect a Coloured man from Stirtonville, was unheard of. He was a hero for what he built at St Anthony's and is remembered for the legacy he left. He touched the lives of people throughout South Africa and the world so much so that one congregant referred to Father Stan as the 'Mandela of Reiger Park'.

The fundraising efforts extended to captains of industry, overseas donors, the Franciscans, family, friends, politicians, debutante balls, dances, etc. These funds helped with the expansion of the school, the skills centre, the day care centre for the elderly, the alcohol and drug abuse centre (House of Mercy), and the Aids hospice house and anti-retroviral clinics. He had a way of encouraging people into assisting, volunteering and doing their part. Even if it was the same small group, he persisted.

One of his drawbacks was the relatively small group of people he trusted and worked with. Most of the people within this small community were not empowered to take on leadership roles as he surrounded himself with a 'chosen few'. This probably contributed to some of the negative reactions he had to endure when he retired. It seems that something also changed during his last few years. He always said that he wanted to be buried among his people, at Rondebult cemetery. After he passed away in 2012, his burial service was held at St Francis Care Centre in Eveleigh, Boksburg, and he was cremated, which came as a surprise. I had 'forgotten' that Father Stan was Irish, because he was our own, a son of Stirtonville/ Reiger Park.

The Reiger Park congregation, however, was not going to fight over his remains as they enjoyed the fruits of his service for over 40 years. All outreach programmes were always meant to be managed in an integrated way with St Francis Church of Assisi in Reiger Park. It does not mean that things may not change, but it is the way in which it was done. It is not uncommon to meet people in all corners of South Africa that were touched by Father Stan, St Francis Church of Assisi and St Anthony's Adult Education and Skills Centre. We will always love Father Stan and will always remember what he meant and has done for this community. May his legacy continue endlessly! God be with Father Stan forever.

Later life – developments in Reiger Park

I started working immediately after high school at Ferroform Alberton in 1978 and sought an opportunity to become a metallurgist. However, the company discriminated and did not pay for 'people of colour' to further their studies. I worked for about seven months in a very frustrating environment and then resigned. Finding the next good opportunity was not easy. I ended up at a pharmaceutical company that equally exploited my labour and I resigned from there too. I started studies at the University of the Western Cape in 1979. I had an awesome experience at UWC. The lecturers, support staff and the areas where I lived, such as Elsiesriver and Belhar, all assisted me and added to my experiences. This was also the first time I had to live, and study, away from home. Unfortunately, I could not complete my studies due to funding and family needs. The following year, 1980, I again ended up in the metal industry for three months until I was accepted in a trainee manager role at a well-known retailer where I spent twelve years in various managerial positions. I subsequently joined the National Railways in 1993 where I am still working.

I married my high school girlfriend, Merchia Adolph, in 1983 and we have two adult children: a son (Albert Leroy) and daughter (Ermine Daleen, married Bussack), and four grandchildren. My daughter lives here in Reiger Park and my son lives in a complex in Boksburg. Both children have qualified with honours degrees and are in the field of human resources and financial management respectively.

Currently developments in Reiger Park are almost non-existent; housing, socioeconomic interventions, education, municipal, provincial, and national programmes are lacking compared to other areas, and we have major backlogs. The Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of the municipality reveals a pittance of investment in Reiger Park, if you could call it that. The current Leeuwpoort development project and the hub development are the first after decades of zero development. No dent has ever been made to the housing waiting list and the area has had none of the developments of rental stock as witnessed in neighbouring areas in the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality.

Reiger Park (Stirtonville) produced and continues to produce people that contribute across all spheres of education and the economy. My pride is in the people from all walks of life persevering, despite the adversity and strife they have to endure. I love living in this community despite the challenges and frustrations from time to time.

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The journey of an innocent young fellow

Ockert Fransch

I was born in Nigel but spent my early years in Benoni before we moved to Boksburg when I was six years old. I had older parents and my father, Samuel David Fransch, died when I was ten. From then on, I lived with my mum, Phyllis Francina Fransch (née du Preez), a single parent. As an only child I had a wonderful, intimate, loving, childhood relationship with her.

Benoni location had a large mixed community consisting of a Coloured community and an Indian community living side-by-side and near the Black community. The community lived in relative harmony and there was a mixture of religions: Christian, Hindu, Muslim, as well as African religions. Great friendships as well as a few intermarriages between the various population groups took place. These groups of people were totally demarcated from the White population who lived in the Greater Benoni area and who had access to most of the land and resources in the area.

In the 1960s with the Group Areas Act in force, which dictated that various racial groups should live in separate areas, the Coloured community was given notice and forced to sell their properties. They were threatened with expropriation without compensation if they did not do so. They were instructed to move to this new area in Boksburg, a township called Reiger Park. A portion of that township, Stirtonville, had Black inhabitants, who were forced to move to Vosloorus.

The Coloured communities from an adjacent town, Germiston, were also instructed to move to Reiger Park. Over the years many residents from cities and towns throughout South Africa also moved to Reiger Park, mainly because of its proximity to the surrounding industrial areas, Dunswart and Kempton Park. These communities traditionally serviced the mines dating back to when some of the largest and deepest gold mines were located within this Eastern sprawl of the greater Johannesburg area.

My schooling started at a primary school in Benoni within walking distance from home. We all walked to school as it was very safe. I recall that

there was a feeding scheme of some sort providing barley soup and bread. There were also ladies selling basic snacks such as eggs, bread, and other snacks that we really enjoyed. I attended the school there for approximately two years after which we all moved to the new area. The new school, Reiger Park Primary, was also within a short walking distance from home. I recall my primary school years as fun and very playful. I certainly was not a serious pupil at any time.

After primary school we all attended Oosrand High School. I had very little scholarly ambitions and generally continued with my playful existence throughout high school. Looking back, as a single child my choices were largely influenced by friends with little political or educational input. There was a mix of teachers who were mostly well-meaning, some strict, some not so strict.

During my high school years, a drama group called Corsair was formed and they staged various plays. I was not involved in community organisations at all. In hindsight I wish I were since I would have gained tremendously from the knowledge imparted by these community organisations. I also remember during my primary school years there was a talented teacher, Mr Sydney Beck, who was an incredibly good artist. He encouraged young people that had talent to pursue the arts as a career. I recently found out that a friend, Peter Fortuin, had been influenced positively by Mr Beck. It led to him becoming a renowned artist who has been commissioned to sketch prominent figures in South Africa.

The schools were relatively good; however, all schools were subject to inferior syllabi without sufficient resources to prepare students for professions in the fields of medicine, science, engineering, law, or economics. Nevertheless, many students innovated effectively by pivoting from studies such as teaching to become doctors, scientists, or economists. They were probably in the minority, but it was still a considerable effort on the part of those successful students.

In my later school years, Mr Vivian Solomons provided recreation in the form of an Adventure Club which we belonged to. This sparked my interest in physical activities, which I am eternally grateful for as it has remained with me until today. I never really took part in any sports in the area. Names that I can remember were a teacher, Mr Ernest Usher, who was quite involved in soccer, Mr Simon Wangra who was involved in rugby as

Peter Fortuin

In November 2018 het daar 'n artikel oor 'n Reigerparkse kunstenaar in die *Boksburg Advertiser* verskyn.[1] Aan dié kunstenaar, Peter Fortuin, is die taak opgedra om 'n portret van Denis Goldberg, een van die Rivonia-veroordeeldes, te skilder. Nadat hy ongeveer sestien uur aan die portret gewerk het, het die kunstenaar dit gedurende Oktober persoonlik aan Goldberg in sy huis in Houtbaai oorhandig.

Fortuin is in Actonville, Benoni, gebore, maar het in Reigerpark grootgeword. Hy het reeds van jongs af begin skilder. Op laerskool is hy deur die bekende Sydney Beck onderrig, en beskou hom as 'n mentor. Vladimir Tretchikoff was sy ander mentor. Cathy Verheul, sy kunsonderwyser, inspireer hom ook.

Sy droom is om 'n kunssentrum in Reigerpark te open, waar hy veral met jong mense wil werk. Op hierdie manier wil hy die greep van dwelmmisbruik en geweld op die jeug verbreek. Hy erken dat sy geliefde Reigerpark al vir jare onder hierdie twee euwels gebuk gaan en hoop dat sy beoogde sentrum 'n verskil in jong mense se lewens sal maak.

Hy werk sedert die 1980's as ketelmaker vir verskeie maatskappye. Sy vader is Peter Simon Fortuin, wat vir Nampak as 'n masjienoperateur gewerk het. Sy moeder, Margarethe, het vir Telephone Manufacturing South Africa (TMSA) gewerk. Hy is getroud met Ingan. Hulle het vier kinders: Mark, Didiur, Tracey-Lee en Kelly.

well as my immediate neighbour, Mr James Lyons, who was involved in soccer. He had a soccer club called Pirates. Then there was Mr Dougie Anderson who also had a soccer club. Our church's deacon Mr Pieter Magerman was amazing in that he, apart from being a very successful businessman, devoted his energy in managing a soccer club for the youth as well as being a Sunday school teacher for younger children. No doubt there were many other individuals, too many to mention, that contributed in various degrees to organising formal sports as well as other recreational facilities for young people. Unfortunately, the government at the time earmarked very little resources to the community.

There was a strong emphasis on sport, but I never participated. I never gave any thought to any specific career all throughout school and I cannot remember any adult influences in this regard. Sports played a vital role in our community. There was a basic sport stadium and over weekends many people supported sports such as soccer, hockey, and rugby, the main sport. Much later facilities were added but these were largely inferior compared to those provided for the privileged community in Boksburg.

We were fortunate, and probably in the minority, to move into a newly built home in a section called Reiger Park in Boksburg. The rest of what is referred to today as Reiger Park was Stirtonville. Lots of development took place in the area and it was exciting as a child to make new friends. The area also lent itself to exploring the surrounding mine sludge dams as well as mine dumps that we used to frequent and that made a fantastic playground. It later became clear that these areas were not entirely safe as they contained toxic substances, such as cyanide. Notwithstanding it was a relatively good and happy childhood with many friends and lots of adventure.

I made many friends at school as well as in the surrounding areas. We spent lots of time playing the basic games such as *kennetjie,* marbles, street cricket and soccer, and many more. Not much attention was given by the authorities to provide formal recreational structures and facilities. However, the community made the best of the circumstances by using whatever was available. For example, there were the Catholic Church movie screenings on Saturday afternoons and the old beer hall being converted into a cinema as well as a venue for dance functions and parties.

Reiger Park between 1965 and 1968 was a community in the making, with lots of people from different areas being brought together. The authorities did not provide many formal facilities, but our churches played a role in providing venues for people to congregate. The Catholic Church went so far as providing a public library. Policing was not optimal due to the minimal resources earmarked for it. This meant that there was a constant underbelly of crime prevalent in the area.

I do not remember much about the political debates going on at the time. I cannot say if I was unique in this respect. I do not remember any political debate in our own home for instance as well as among my friends. Personally, I have always been naive with very little knowledge up until the age of possibly 20. I do remember when some of the people of my age group attended college and university that there was a heightened awareness of the political situation which they brought back on their breaks. I can only speak for myself. There could have been many other students that had more robust debates or political debates with their parents or teachers in both primary and secondary school. They might have been exposed to a greater extent in their homes or friendship circles. I also do not recall much debate in classrooms from teachers, both in primary and secondary school on the issue of apartheid or other political debates at the time.

I was isolated from the political mainstream in the area and can only look at the political landscape in retrospect. At the time, from the 1960s to the early

1980s, I can only speak on my reflections of what I observed, which were minimal. I recall that there were some leaders in the Tricameral system that were involved in politics at the time. A name that comes to mind is Jac Rabie. At the time I was not aware of other politically active people such as Mr George du Plessis whom I only learnt about much later in my life. I am sure this is very different from many other people of my age who may or may not have had much greater access to political knowledge and involvement.

My perception is that people in Reiger Park, coming from various areas on the East Rand, integrated well. However, there had to be an undercurrent of friction that led to crime as many criminal groups fought to establish their territories. On the positive side the area had a large Christian community as well as a smaller Muslim community. These religious institutions played a vital role in bringing people together and creating a measure of harmony in the area. Overall, given the difficult circumstances, people made the best of it and integrated well. There were many churches and religious institutions in the community. These churches played a vital role in providing solace and congregation to the community. The small Muslim community attended one of the oldest mosques in Kalamazoo. The Catholic Church played a big supportive role to the community of Reiger Park. The church was blessed with a leader, Father Stan Brennan, who had a great vision and a great ability to garner resources from the surrounding industries. This church provided an educational and skills training centre, a library service, and several other facilities.

The mines have been the bedrock of economic activity for the whole of the East Rand. The local mine, ERPM, provided some working opportunities for the community. I am not aware of large-scale contributions by the mines to the progress of Reiger Park. The degradation of the environment due to the sludge dams as well as the mine dumps have had a negative effect on the surrounding environment. There were some small contributions to the area. I remember a rugby field belonging to the mines being used by the residents. Indirect advantages would be the selective jobs provided by the industries that supported the mines.

Over the years progress in Reiger Park has been slow, and resources provided to the area have been minimal. There has been a generational shift in the area in that many of the younger generation that went to school in the 1960s have surpassed their parents in terms of education and probably economically as well. Being near to the feeder industries, to mining as well as the later aero-industries such as Atlas, provided job opportunities for those with artisanal skills such as in woodwork, metalwork, and mechanical expertise in the community.

Looking at Reiger Park now it is clear that it still experiences the aftereffects of its segregation from the main economy. Many in the community have not been able to leverage generational wealth, skills, and knowledge.

Reiger Park had its fair share of criminal activities. The anecdotal stories were frightening, such as a person murdering more than five people in one day. I also recall attending a house party when a group of gangsters cornered another gangster and killed him with machetes and all kinds of other weapons. We all had to scurry through doors and windows to escape harm. Reiger Park would make an incredible source of inspiration for crime stories. There is probably an opportunity for writers to publish factual and fiction novels about crime in the area. Nevertheless, the community maintained a high degree of normality alongside these criminal activities. Strong and ethical policemen like Mr Abraham Morden played a central role in maintaining law and order, despite the lack of resources.

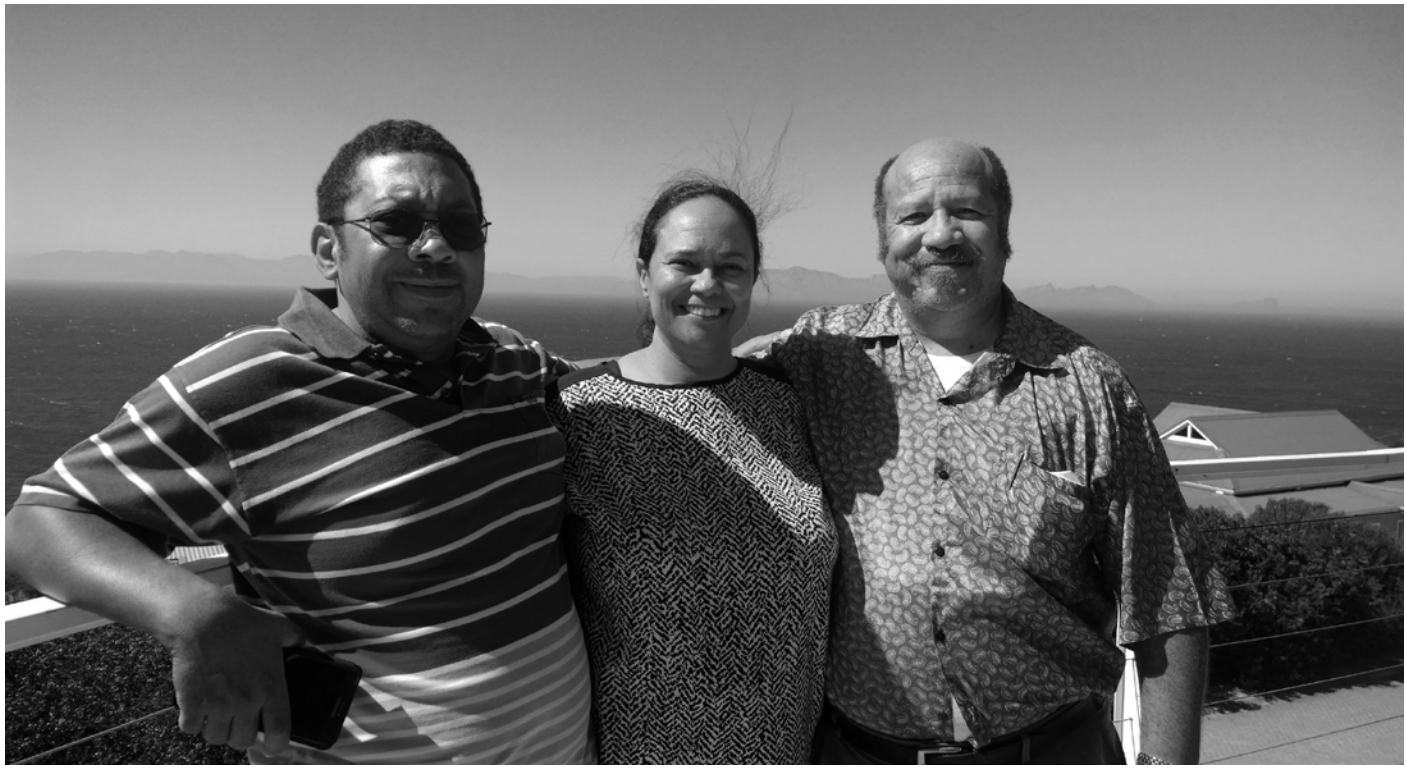
Ockert Fransch and his mother Phyllis and his children Earl and Marion (Fransch collection).

The riots in 1981 were one of the watershed moments in Reiger Park. I am not sure how or why they started, but recall that there was large-scale looting, mainly of the Indian shops at the time. Most of the shops in the area were owned by Indian residents and this could have been the friction that ignited the riots. However, I have no knowledge to back this up. It is my observation that Indian traders are well-versed generationally in the art and science of business. Having these abilities allow them to utilise economic opportunities wherever such opportunities appear. This could be the reason why there were mainly Indian shops in the area. The Coloured community may have lacked the skills to compete. However, the aftermath of the riots did provide a gap to be filled for trading in the area. It appears that many members of the Coloured community did take up this opportunity.

Reiger Park, a community that had been forcefully relocated from various towns on the East Rand, has been very resilient and produced a fair amount of progressive younger generations in many fields. On the other hand, the forced removals, combined with the new government's management of the area, has embedded a stagnant legacy that dampens growth in the area.

Since I live in Cape Town, I have had very little first-hand contact with Reiger Park over the past few decades. My contact is through family still living there and very occasional visits. I would like to see better access to high quality education for all members of the community, starting with a state-of-the-art early learning regime for all children. I would also like to see compulsory life orientation education for all young adults, specifically for young parents. There should be better management of the resources and of the sprouting of informal settlements surrounding the area as well as fighting of crime, which seems to form part of a national challenge. The low-hanging fruit in crime management in my view would be the introduction of technology to optimise the communication flow among all sectors of law and order.

The people of Reiger Park should prioritise education and lifelong learning. I would urge the unemployed younger residents to seek employment and experience abroad. View yourself as a citizen of the world and not only of Reiger Park or South Africa. Many changes, especially creation of employment, may be a slow process, so don't wait, go out into the world. I am worried about the unbridled expansion of informal settlements in the area. It is a cause of great concern and will only lead to increased instability and friction as well as increased crime. I am pleased about the progress of the younger generations, who have flourished in many areas despite the negative circumstances that existed and still exist. Academic institutions can



Ockert and Karen Fransch with Edward Hank (Hank collection).

earmark resources to study and provide innovative solutions for progress in areas like Reiger Park. The community should focus on better implementation of all initiatives.

While I did study formally immediately after school, I went for technical training at the Department of Telecommunications. I do not recall having any ambition at the time, either through lack of knowledge or lack of a well-crafted career vision. This led me to a lifelong career as an entrepreneur, after a few years of working for corporations. I started working by coincidence at the Department of Telecommunications. I had no intention of working there. I accompanied a friend who went for an interview and was asked to interview for the job.

Yes, mine is a life of mostly incidental decision-making, that fortunately turned out well. For this I am very grateful and feel extremely blessed. Following a stint at the Department of Telecommunications, starting in 1978-79, I worked for private electronics and computer companies for approximately 5 to 6 years. An advert in the newspaper caught my attention as it indicated that I could earn four times my monthly income by selling properties. I started selling properties part-time for a company in Benoni. Later I registered a company called Pleasant Homes and grew the company to the extent of having more than 10 estate agents selling mainly in a Coloured racially demarcated area called Ennerdale in Johannesburg.

After a few years of running a real estate company we progressed into construction. Initially we built private homes for individuals and thereafter started tendering for state contracts where we successfully constructed schools, fire stations, clinics, police stations, and multi-story refurbishments.

During my entrepreneurial pursuits I studied some BCom subjects in dribs and drabs and when

I was 52 my brother-in-law suggested that I enrol for an MBA. I completed my MBA in 2012 at the University of Cape Town. It provided great insights into the formalities of business, and I could look back in hindsight on everything I did right and wrong during my eclectic career.

I am semi-retired and spend most of my time mentoring small businesses. I have two children, Earl and Marion, from a long-term relationship that terminated. I got married in 1993 to Karen (née Mitchell) and we have a son, David. At present I am engaged as a mentor for Fetola, a company sponsored by the SAB Foundation whose main objective is to grow and assist small businesses. I have great empathy for the onerous journey of small businesses and hope to provide motivation to assist in growing their businesses. I look forward to engaging in this manner if the Lord allows.

1 November 2020

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Father Stan Brennan and St Anthony's Education Centre

Cecil H Morden

James Seamus Brennan was born on 1 December 1929 at Carrowkeel, County Roscommon, Ireland, the seventh of ten children born to James Brennan and his wife Kate (née O'Dowd) who were farmers.[1] At a young age Seamus Brennan decided to dedicate his life to God. "I thought God was all loving and all powerful and if we lived a good life, He would reward us", he said. The story of St Francis of Assisi made a life-changing impression on him and at the earliest possible age he applied to join the Franciscan order. "There was something deeply compelling, calling me to the Franciscans." In September 1948 he adopted the name 'Stanislaus' (Stan). After four years studying in Rome and a year spent teaching at the Franciscan College, Gormanston, County Meath, in Dublin, Father Stan was posted to South Africa in 1957. He was appointed as spiritual director at the Diocesan Seminary in Boksburg (which closed in 1968 owing to a lack of priestly vocations). But he yearned to work with the local community and when the opportunity arose, he grabbed it with both hands.[2]

In the early 1960s a visit to his sister, a nun teaching in Nigeria, inspired him to open a school; both siblings were inspired by their father's earlier efforts in delivering adult education in Carrowkeel.[3] Father Stan was appointed parish priest at St Francis Catholic Church in Reiger Park in 1965. The premises were an old derelict African church-cum-school building with no electricity or running water.

In 1966 Father Stan opened a library on the premises and organised night classes in literacy taught by volunteer parishioners. In 1967 he assisted with the establishment of a day care centre for the elderly on the church premises and in 1991 the St Anthony's Day Care Centre for senior citizens moved into its own premises in Reiger Park, close to the Reiger Park police station. He also established and edited the *Beam*, a substantial parish annual publication seeking to foster a sense of community.[4] In his first editorial in the *Beam* he noted that "if people are to take a significant place in the destiny of their community, education is a vital means of opening a new way."[5] From humble beginnings,

Father Stan created the world class St Anthony's Education Centre in Reiger Park.[6] Over the years, thousands of students have passed through this Centre. He did not take 'no' for an answer when it came to eliciting donations. One of his dedicated parishioners, Ambrose du Plessis, recalls his unshakable faith that God will provide.[7] One Friday Father Stan confined in him that the Centre was short of R20 000 and that he did not know where the money would come from, but believed that God would make a way. A few days later Father Stan showed Ambrose a cheque to the value of R20 000 donated by one of the companies on the East Rand.

The Franciscan Order, The Sisters of Mercy, Dominican Order, the Holy Cross sisters, Christian Brothers, members of St Anthony's Club, the Catholic Women's League and the St Francis of Assisi executive all assisted Father Stan in developing St Anthony's. They worked tirelessly and without any financial reward.[8] For many decades the Sisters of Mercy have made an enormous contribution to the growth and success of Father Stan's vision for St Anthony's Education Centre which began in 1974 when a Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor (the Franciscan Order) asked the Sisters to help in establishing the adult education programme at St Anthony's. Sister Magdalen Green was appointed the first Principal and was responsible for formalizing the Adult Education Centre. She contributed enormously to the growth of the Centre and served on the St Anthony's Education Centre (SAEC) Board of Governors for many years. Over the years the Sisters of Mercy also assisted Father Stan in many other ways, such as by helping in the Parish and the outreach programmes.

Below are listed some of the Sisters of Mercy who contributed significantly to the Centre's programmes. Their contribution and input will long be remembered by the thousands of people whose lives were changed as a result of their years of unselfish service and dedication.

Fr Stan Brennan dedicated his life to the people of Reiger Park (St Anthony's Education Centre).

Associated with St Anthony's Education Centre: Sr Magdalen, principal; Sr Rosarie, vice principal; Sr Mercedes, principal of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET); Sr Claire, Vista University Programme; Sr Connie, Franciscan Matric Project; and Sr Myra.

Associated with St Anthony's Parish: Sr Ursula.

Associated with St Frances Care Centre: Sr Maura and Sr Rachel.

Associated with House of Mercy: Sr Therese and Sr Regina.[9]

In 1988 Father Stan opened the multi-racial House of Mercy in Eveleigh, Boksburg (at the time a White-only residential area) to help those addicted to drugs and alcohol. Appalled at the lack of treatment facilities for those suffering from HIV/AIDS, he established a medical and social support facility, the St Francis Care Centre in 1991, just opposite the House of Mercy. Facing significant local opposition to the presence of an AIDS clinic by the residents, he overcame it by admitting dementia and psychiatric patients (1992), and winning a legal case regarding zoning by mobilising community, diplomatic and political allies to fight an effective public relations campaign. In 2006 a shelter for battered women and abused children, Mercy Haven, was opened in South Street, Boksburg, close to the Boksburg Lake.[10]

Father Stan Brennan OFM: Words of comfort and eulogy
George K du Plessis

I have known Father Stan since 1965 when he came to Reiger Park. I must say I am truly thankful to have met and worked with such a remarkable man, a giant. Fr Stan found a people without hope and perhaps less faith. He witnessed the frustration the anger and bitterness of a community. They needed uplifting and restoring of their faith and human dignity.

May I go back in time to 1965? The forceful removal of Africans, Coloureds and Indian communities was the apartheid government's grand plan to enforce their divide and rule policy and to halt these communities from encroaching into White areas. Major political parties were banned; Nelson Mandela and others were convicted on charges of sabotage and of offences under the Suppression of Communism Act and sentenced to life imprisonment.

The government was convinced that the liberation movements were destroyed, and they set about uprooting communities. About 4 million people were uprooted and resettled to designated areas. It led to the breakdown of many families. It meant the loss of their houses, loss of jobs, of friends, the disruption of schooling for their children, and it meant the loss of security and dignity.

From the outset there was a shortage of houses. The removals also brought about gang fights, family arguments and accusations. The children bore the brunt of the breakdown of families.

Amid this gloom of un-employment and spiralling violence Fr Stan brought a message of hope, a lesson of love and selflessness. He was not politically obsessed. As an Irishman he was liberated from the emotional baggage of apartheid and looked to the future rather than the past. He could have criticised and condemned the National Party government, had his name in the papers as a freedom fighter, but he decided to build a dysfunctional community into a proud and functional one.

One of the difficult parts of his work as a priest was working with virtually no financial resources at his disposal. He did everything in his power to heal the wounds of the people who were victims of the apartheid system, and to help people of different backgrounds; for the very poor and those in the better position to accept one another and to live together in peace.

Father believed that individuals' spiritual need and their deeds should go hand in hand. We must go out and make this a better world for all.

I believe that God from the time of Moses, Amos, and King David has chosen all leaders, religious and political. God must have inspired the actions of donors to invest, not only money but their time and caring support of Fr Stan's work. We are going through a period where many NGOs are closing; We cannot allow the work of Fr Stan to go under. The Lotto and the government are not playing their part. They are reluctant to subsidise such projects. I call on business, workers, and ordinary people to assist with fundraising.

The Almighty protected and guided Fr Stan. His name should go up in lights along with Albert Einstein, Chris Barnard, Marie Curie, even St Francis of Assisi. We should honour Fr Stan and do everything in our power so that his legacy and work would not fall apart and die. His work and legacy should continue long after we have passed on. He was a legendary leader, a prophet, an icon, and trusted servant of the Almighty.

I believe that the Pope and the Church should officially recognised Fr Stan for his exceptional holiness and work, for which I believe he has won veneration on earth and a high place in heaven.

Fr Stan, I salute you.

May God bless you and protect you.[15]

Father Stan returned to Ireland frequently to raise funds and to visit his family. His work was recognised internationally, and he was awarded scores of humanitarian awards, notably the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays in June 2012. Endlessly enthusiastic, if somewhat paternalistic, he welcomed all religions and ethnicities to avail of the services St Anthony's provided, encouraging many conversions to Catholicism.[11] He inspired and cared for thousands of students over the years and changed the lives of countless individuals with his care and compassion.

In 2005 he underwent coronary bypass surgery, and moved to the St Francis Care Centre. After suffering heart problems, Father Stan died on 6 July 2012 at Sunward Hospital, Boksburg. After the funeral service on 12 July at St Francis Care Centre in Eveleigh, Boksburg, he was cremated.[12]

In 2016 St Anthony's Education Centre celebrated its 50th anniversary of being an education and training institution that has given hope to thousands of people. Individuals who have given their time freely and willingly over the years to make St Anthony's what it is today include previous chairpersons of the Board: Messrs Billy Hood, Maurice Allen, Maurice Radebe, Lot Ndlovu, Warwick Soulsby, and David Prinsloo who served the Centre and guided it through many peaks and valleys. Mrs Janet du Preez, a previous vice-chairperson, was attached to the Centre for over 16 years. Mr Brian Neale taught accounting to the St Anthony students and served the institution for over 30 years.[13]

Fathers Thabo Sefoli and Anthony Spencer followed in the footsteps of Father Stan and also served on the Board. Rose Webb was the acting head of the St Anthony's Centre in 2016. The Skills Training Programme was established in 1995. Elsewhere in the publication Jerry Theys elaborates on his involvement in the establishment of this programme. In 2016 the Skills Training Programme was under the leadership of Jimmy Thosago. Patricia Blair was responsible for fundraising.

At the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the St Anthony's Education Centre the St Anthony's library was blessed by Bishop Duncan and renamed the Fr Stan Brennan Library. It was officially opened by Dennis Esau, its former long-serving and by then retired, librarian.[14]

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The schools and their leaders in Benoni and Reiger Park

Cecil H Morden

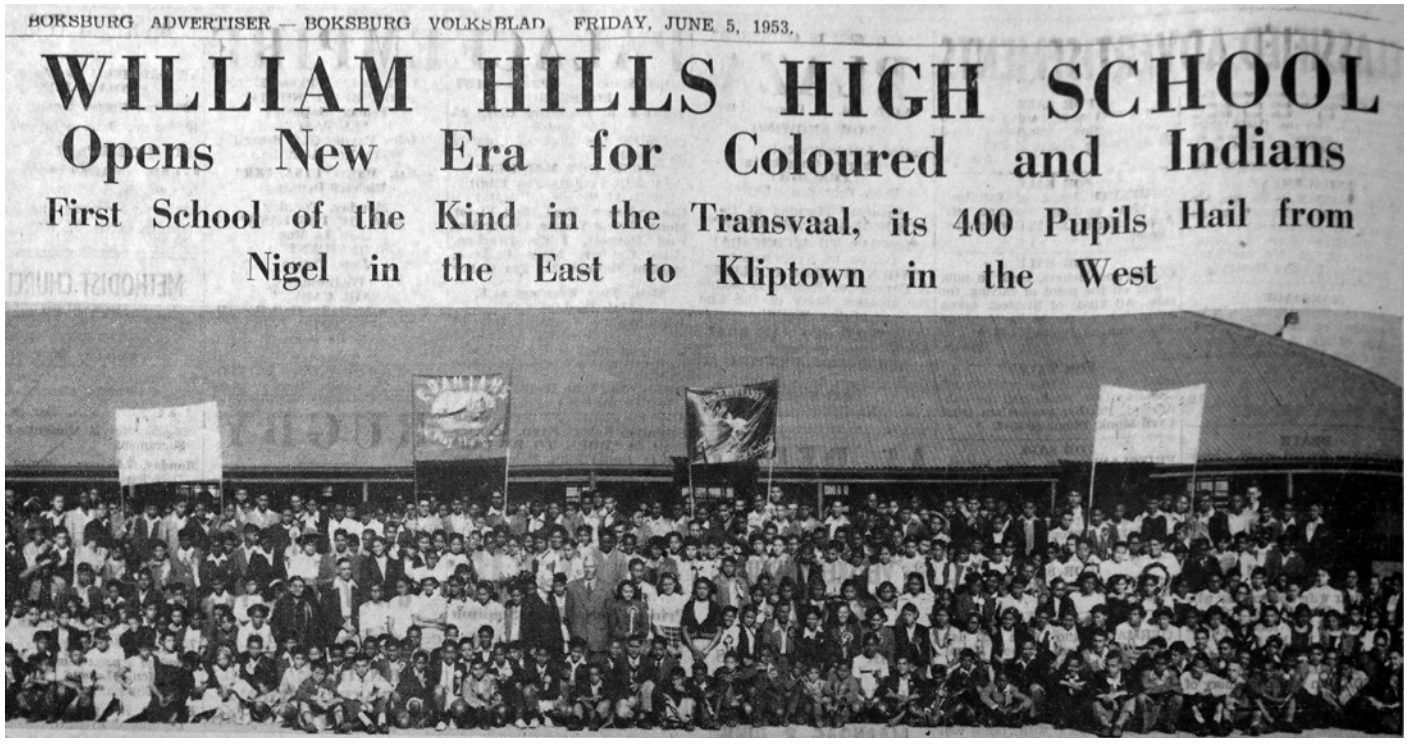
The Ebenezer-Congregational Church

Over the years Christian Churches and educational institutions (schools) played important roles in the lives of the people of Reiger Park and in the areas from which they were uprooted. The Ebenezer-Congregational Church was the trailblazer in education for Coloureds on the Reef between 1896 and the early 1930s. The congregation was formed in 1890 when Coloured members of the Congregational Church who moved from the Eastern Cape to the Reef were denied attendance of a service at the newly established White Congregational Church in End Street, Johannesburg.

"A certain Mr Carolus said: 'so far and no further, we are not going to beg these people to have a seat in their Church'; it started as a little fire."[1] These church members, referred to as non-conformists, were later joined by a few Coloured persons who moved from Kimberley, including Mr JW Ontong, a wealthy man.[2] Most of them were members of the Dutch Reformed Church, who also could not find places to worship on the Reef.

Around 1895 the Congregational Union of South Africa (CUSA) was exploring options to extend their missionary work among the Coloured communities in the Eastern Cape to those who have moved to the Reef. "They transferred one of their most successful and enterprising young ministers, the Reverend Charles Phillips, from his thriving Graaff-Reinet congregation to the Reef. There he became minister of the fledgling Ebenezer congregation, made up of just 26 members."[3] Subsequently, the Ebenezer-Congregational Church, led by Phillips and later by Rev Rodgers during its initial years, became very active in Coloured communities on the Reef.

The success of the Ebenezer Church on the Reef, like that of the London Missionary Society (LMS) in the Cape, was rooted in the provision of material resources which other institutions, including the state, were not prepared to provide. The first and most 'material' reason for the Church's popularity lay in the way it addressed the lack of educational facilities for Coloureds in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR).[4]



BOKSBURG ADVERTISER — BOKSBURG VOLKSBLAD FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 1953.

WILLIAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Opens New Era for Coloured and Indians

First School of the Kind in the Transvaal, its 400 Pupils Hail from Nigel in the East to Kliptown in the West

William Hills High School. The original newspaper caption reads: The teachers in the photo are: Mr BA Braaf, B.A., L.D.; Mr AJ Oliphant, B.Sc, C.D.; Mr M Hommel, C.Ph.; Mr LT Behrens, B.Sc.; Mr D de Jager, B.A.; Mr E Abdullah, B.A., L.D.; Mr CH Brink, C.Ph.; Miss. FD Barlow, B.A., S.T.D.; Mr EA Fraser, L.D.; Mr PJ Pretorius, C.P.L.; Mr PTE Henry, L.D.; Mr K Veeragaloo, L.D.; Mr H Brown, L.D.; Mr MV Felix, B.A., C.D.; Mr N Rathinasamy, B.A., L.D.; Mr RD Ontong, B.A., S.T.D.; Mr JT Zini, C.D.; Mr EA Charles, L.D.; Mrs WC Hoskins, T.3; Mr AS Jansen, C.Ph. (vice-principal). The principal, Mr MHC Jansen has the qualifications T.2 and BA (intermediate). The school secretary, also on the photo is Mr AA Lowton. Mr William Hills and Mr Jansen, the principal of the School, are in the centre of the group (*Boksburg Advertiser — Boksburg Volksblad*, June 1953).

When Phillips arrived in Johannesburg in 1896, he immediately began to address the need for educational facilities among his prospective Coloured congregants. Despite receiving no state subsidies Phillips established a school during the first months of his ministry. According to a history of Coloured education on the Reef (Witwatersrand): "it was the Congregational Union [Ebenezer-Congregational Church] that devoted its energies almost exclusively during the nineties [1890s] to the education and evangelisation of the Eurafrican or Coloured people of the Witwatersrand."[5] After the South African War, Phillips came to an arrangement with the Milner administration, and subsequent governments, through which the Ebenezer-Congregational Church would across the Reef – "where there was a fair gathering of people working on the mines, and a certain number of children" – build church structures and hire them to the government for educational purposes.

The educational endeavours of Phillips were a major part of the Church's appeal. Just as importantly was the practice of hiring churches to the government for use as schools which provided the Ebenezer Church with funds for expansion. By 1906 Phillips had established seven schools which were hired to the government. One of these schools was the Boksburg Coloured School, which many years later was renamed Goede Hoop Primary School. By the early 1930s there were 25 fully-fledged schools (predominantly) for Coloureds across the Reef which was initiated by Phillips.

Phillips Memorial, the Ebenezer Congregational Church, Arthur Hobbs Rd, Reiger Park (CH Morden).

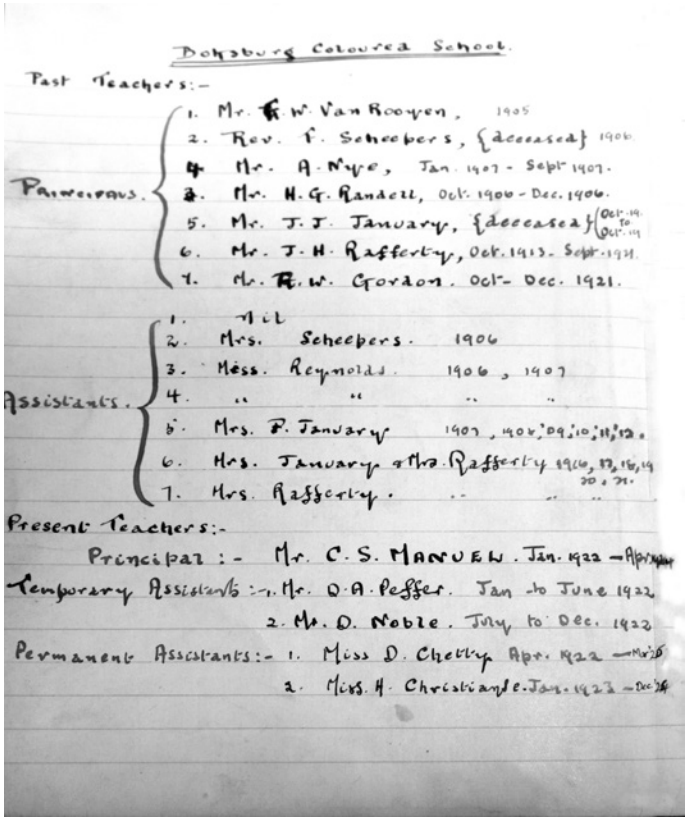
William Hills High School in Benoni was among them. At the time of Phillips's death, in 1937, the Church had become a major social and political force in the lives of the Coloured population of the Witwatersrand.[6]

Ebenezer's monthly communions became important religious and social events for the congregants on the Reef. The Church played an important role in the development of the sense of "being part of a developing Coloured community". Coloured political organization in the Transvaal was to a large extent moribund and elitist.[7] Therefore, most people channelled their energies towards activities associated with the Church. "Ebenezer provided an avenue for social mobility that few other institutions could match, as well as access to education. It brought together a dispersed and often demoralised group, which was spread out throughout Johannesburg and the Reef, and allowed them to create rudimentary weapons of community protection."[8]

Mr William Hills

Mr William Hills was the founder and managing editor of Amalgamated Press (SA) (Pty) Ltd, owner of The *East Rand Express*, which he co-founded with his brother George. Later *The East Rand Express* and its successor was owned by Geo Constable Ltd Proprietors, which became a diversified printing and stationery company. Mr Hills was born in Cranbrook, Kent, in 1869. He came to South Africa in 1895 to work for the *Port Elizabeth Advertiser*. On 22 April 1897 he moved to the Witwatersrand (the Rand), joining the *Krugersdorp Times*. He was editor of *The East Rand Express* from its inception.

The East Rand Express commenced publication in 1898 and suspended its operations with the outbreak of the Second Anglo Boer War, which lasted from 11 October 1899 to 31 May 1902. The paper resumed publication after the war, on 6 September 1902. As a regional paper it was based in Boksburg, but covered local news for the whole of the East Rand, from Germiston to Springs. The



Boksburg Coloured School.

Past Teachers:-

Pairmasters.
1. Mr. F. W. Van Rooyen, 1905
2. Rev. F. Scheepers, {deceased} 1906
4. Mr. A. Nye, Jan. 1907 - Sept 1907.
3. Mr. H. G. Randell, Oct. 1906 - Dec. 1906.
5. Mr. J. J. January, {deceased} (Oct. 19 to Oct. 19)
6. Mr. J. H. Rafferty, Oct. 1913. Sept. 1921.
7. Mr. F. W. Gordon. Oct. Dec. 1921.

Assistants.
1. Nil
2. Mrs. Scheepers. 1906
3. Miss. Reynolds. 1906, 1907
4. " " " "
5. Mrs. P. January 1907, 1908, 09, 10, 11, 12.
6. Mrs. January & Mrs. Rafferty 1906, 13, 16, 19 20, 21.
7. Mrs. Rafferty. " " " "

Present Teachers:-

Principal :- Mr. C. S. MANUEL. Jan. 1922 — Apr.

Temporary Assistants :- 1. Mr. O. A. Peffer. Jan to June 1922
2. Mr. D. Noble. July to Dec. 1922

Permanent Assistants:- 1. Miss D. Cherry Apr. 1922 — Mar. 26
2. Mrs. H. Christiaanse. Jan. 1923 — Dec. 24

Entries in the official log book of the Boksburg Coloured School, established in 1904 (CH Morden).

Express ceased operations on 31 December 1936. In 1946, after the Second World War, a local newspaper called the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, focusing on news from Boksburg, was launched. By this time the other towns on the East Rand launched their own local newspapers. The first issue of the *Benoni City Times* was published on 10 September 1921.

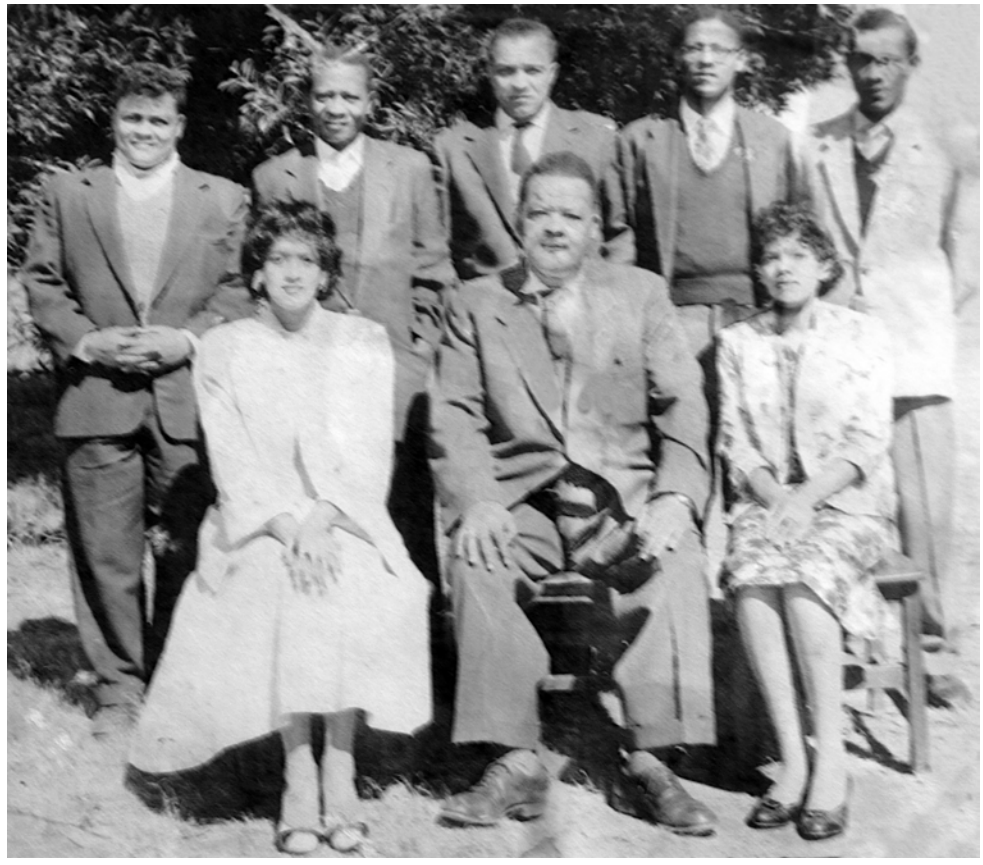
Mr Hills died on 2 September 1959 in Germiston Hospital a few days before his 90th birthday on 8 September. In addition to being editor of *The East Rand Express* and later other local newspapers on the East Rand, he served as an elected member of the East Rand School Board for 30 years and was chairman of the board for three years. A staunch churchman, he was also one of the leading laymen in the Church of the Province of South Africa.[9]

Under the editorship of Mr Hills, *The East Rand Express* became a respected, well-written and widely read local newspaper. Mr Hills was well travelled and penned a number of very informative articles about his travels. One such article appeared in the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad* of 1 October 1948. This article was written on his return from Europe and South America and eloquently discussed the challenges of urban housing and town planning. He wrote:

> the insistent attempt [by most countries, including many in Europe after the destructions of World War II] to provide accommodation for citizens near their work. Transport costs in terms of time and money have increased… to live far away from the place of employment has become something to avoid if possible.
>
> In South America, garden blocks intersperse the building blocks at near intervals. The result is that two or three high blocks of flats house as many people as a small township would on the Rand, and yet have plenty of communal garden space generally laid out in lawns, with flowers and trees, the latter being allowed to grow full height instead of being stinted as is in South Africa.
>
> The cost of new housing on the individual stand principle for both whites and natives is prohibitive. Should the houses be built on cheap land, the land is probably an hour's bus drive from the business centre, and if the inconvenience and bus fares are considered the resulting house is anything but cheap.[10]

Mr Hills's commitment to education, especially the improvement of the quality of education, was reflected in the many years he served on the East Rand School Board. His stature was recognised when one of the well-known and respected Coloured and Indian high schools in the Transvaal, the William Hills High School for Coloureds and Indians in Benoni, was named after him in the 1940s.

Yet as editor he articulated very conservative political and social views and made no secret of the fact that he agreed with the majority sentiment in White circles at the time that the interests of White people should be uppermost. Some of these views were vividly expressed in two editorials in 1905 and 1910, with reference to Indian and Coloured people respectively: "On the East Rand, thanks to the determined stand taken, Asiatic traders have not been able to get a foothold, but the evil seems to be spreading elsewhere";[11] "We must apply to Coloured skilled labour the same tactics which enabled us to keep out the Asiatic trader."[12]



Unnamed staff members of the Boksburg Coloured School, c.1920-1922.

The above quotations are selective and not intended to isolate Mr Hills for criticism of bigotry and/or racial discrimination. Many others have said and done much worse. We acknowledge the contributions of the local newspapers Mr Hills edited in compiling this book. Nevertheless, it is important that we attempt to fully understand our past in order to help carve out a peaceful, just, dignified and prosperous future for everyone.

Boksburg Coloured School / Goede Hoop Primary School

The first school in the vicinity of what is today the greater Reiger Park was opened in 1904 as the Ebenezer Church Mission School.[13] The following year the administration of the school was taken over by the Transvaal Education Department and the name changed to 'Government Coloured School, Boksburg Location', or just Boksburg Coloured School.[14] The school was required to keep a logbook in which the Inspector made entries after regular visits to the school. During its initial years the school was only a two-person school, the principal and an assistant. Between 1905 and 1907 the school had four principals: Mr GW van Rooyen, Rev F Scheepers, Mr A Nye and Mr Randell. Mr JJ January was the principal between 1907 and 1912, followed by Mr JH Rafferty (1913–21), Mr RW Gordon also in 1921 and Mr CS Manuel (1922–24). Mrs Scheepers and Miss Reynolds were assistants at the school in 1906 and 1907. Mrs January was an assistant between 1907 and 1912; she was joined by Mrs Rafferty between 1916 and 1921. The assistants in 1922 were Mr OA Peffer, Mr O Noble, Miss D Chetty

The staff of Goede Hoop Primary School with Mr Courtriers as principal, c.1970s (Goede Hoop Primary School).

and Miss H Christianse.

The first entry into the logbook was by inspector Mr Cyrus H Acherson on 25 August 1905, after he visited the school on 18 August 1905. It recorded 57 leaners in attendance of which ten were in standard two, the highest grade at the school at the time. The entry also noted: "There are six Natives in the school who are not entitled to be enrolled in a Coloured School."

A logbook entry on 2 February 1910 showed that the school had 72 leaners enrolled and that the school closed on that day for "removal to the new location". The school restarted on 21 February 1910 in a large, hired hall because the 'new' school building was not ready yet. The relocation of the school followed the establishment of what later become known as Stirtonville at the beginning of 1909. This school was later renamed Stirtonville Coloured School and after 1964 changed to Goede Hoop Primary School.

Between 1920 and 1934 the admission register of the school recorded the home languages of the children as Afrikaans, Tamil, English and Chinese. The Chinese surname Kwi was recorded a few times. The addresses of the children were recorded as Stirtonville, Old Location Boksburg, Comet Location, Elsburg, Rondebult Farm and Leeuwpoort Farm.

During the late 1930s or early 1940s an English medium school, predominantly for Indian children, was opened in Stirtonville. In 1964 this school became Drommedaris Primary School. The Black children of Stirtonville attended the St Albert's School at the Catholic Church. The Stirtonville Public School for Black learners, presumably a secondary school, was officially opened on 28 May 1948. The buildings of this school were to become the first premises of the Oosrand High School in 1968. At the time of the establishment of Reiger Park, the principal was Mr John Collins. Other principals included Mr Courtriers and Mr Henley. The current principal is Mr RJK Grotewold.

Pres Nelson Mandela with members of staff of Oosrand Secondary School on 26 June 1995 (Oosrand Secondary School).

Oosrand High School started in 1964 with Mr VE Felix as principal. He was succeeded for a short period of time by Rev Diedericks, probably in an acting capacity. Thereafter the principals were Mr Johnny Wathen (1970–77), and Dr WJ Filander (1978–93). Mr Winston Milton served in an acting capacity, followed by Mr Vincent CD Opperman (1996–January 2009), Mr Lincoln ND Van Ross, (2009–19). Presently, Mr Peter Arendse is the principal.

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Die diep spore van Arthur Hare en Jim Abrams

Cecil H Morden

Mnr. Arthur James Hare en Drommedaris Primêre Skool

Mnr. Arthur James Hare het sy onderwysloopbaan in 1950 by Modderbee Kleurlingskool begin.[1] In die daaropvolgende jaar het hy by Germiston Primêre Skool aangesluit waar hy later tot viseprinsipaal bevorder is en ook vir twee jaar as prinsipaal waargeneem het. Vanaf 1971 tot 1991 het hy as prinsipaal van Drommedaris Primêre Skool gedien.

Volgens mev. Margaret Abdull wat in 1964 by die skool betrokke was, het mnr. Hare die leisels by die 'ou' Drommedaris Skool oorgeneem na die aftrede van mnr. WJ September. Die skool het uit sinkklaskamers bestaan, en die hoof se kantoor was geen uitsondering nie. Die toiletgeriewe het uit die emmerstelsel bestaan. Die skool het uit sewe klaskamers, sewe leerkragte en 'n leerlingtal van ongeveer 200 bestaan. In Februarie 1973 het die kantoor en drie klaskamers afgebrand. Mnr. Hare en drie leerkragte het met die goedhartigheid van Vader Stan Brennan 'n tydelike heenkome by St Anthony's gevind. Aan die begin van 1975 het Drommedaris Primêre Skool na sy huidige perseel, wat voorheen deur Oosrand Hoërskool gebruik is, verskuif. Die meeste van hierdie geboue is in 1948 opgerig as 'n skool vir swart leerlinge in die destydse Stirtonville. Oosrand Hoër het 'n nuwe perseel teen die einde van 1974 betrek. Teen 1991 het Drommedaris Primêre Skool met 'n leerlingtal van 1 200 en 40 leerkragte gespog.

Onder mnr. Hare se leiding het kulturele aktiwiteite by die skool gefloreer. Die skoolkoor, operette-opvoerings, trompoppies en verskillende skooltoere het 'n integrale deel van die skoolprogram geword. Mnr. Hare se liefde vir musiek is welbekend. Hy was 'n musiekonderwyser en het ook Engels onderrig. Hy het vele skoolkore afgerig en was dirigent van verskeie massakore. Hy het by die New Mayfair Orchestra in die 1940's aangesluit en was vir baie jare lid van die Bosmont Congregational Kerkkoor. Ten tye van sy uittrede was hy dirigent van hierdie koor.

Sy betrokkenheid by georganiseerde onderwys het by die Transvaal Indian and Coloured Teachers

Die personeel van Drommedaris Primêre Skool met mnr. Arthur Hare as skoolhoof, c.1990 (Drommedaris Primêre Skool).

Association (TICTA) begin met mnr. AJ Swart as President. Hierdie organisasie het egter 'n vroeë dood gesterf weens apartheidswetgewing. Toe het die Transvaal Association of Coloured Teachers (TACT) die lig gesien, wat later sy naam verander het na die Transvaal Association of Teachers / Transvaalse Onderwysvereniging (TAT). Laasgenoemde was nog aktief in 1991. Mnr. Hare is in 1989 as visepresident van die TAT verkies, en die daaropvolgende jaar herverkies. Hy was ook lid van UTASA.

Mnr. Hare se naam is ook sinoniem met die Transvaalse Strandfonds (Seaside Fund) vir kinders, volgens mnr. HJ Fransch, die sekretaris van die fonds. Hy het as verteenwoordiger begin en het later verskillende portefeuljes beklee waar hy die uitstekende werk van die stigters van die fonds voortgesit het. By sy uittrede was mnr. Hare voorsitter van die fonds. Hy was ook koorleier van die Bosmont Congregational Kerk.

Mnr. Hare was vol dank vir die onderwysmanne Frank Jacobs, Ernest Hobbs, Clarence September en WR Goliath wat hom geïnspireer het om ten alle tye sy beste te gee. Hy het sy kollegas in die onderwysverenigings bedank, asook die Strandfonds, die kore, die sportorganisasies en diegene met wie hy oor die jare saam onderwys het, asook al die leerlinge wat oor die jare in sy sorg toevertrou was.

Drommedaris se senior bestuurspan, bekend as die Kabinet, het in 1991 uit Arthur Hare (prinsipaal), Attlee Clements (senior adjunkprinsipaal), Ernest Usher (adjunkprinsipaal), Margaret Abdull,

Raymond Stoffels, Madalene Thomas en Vincent Felix bestaan. Mnr. Clements het vir mnr. Hare opgevolg as hoof, 'n pos wat hy tot Februarie 1997 beklee het. Die huidige hoof is mnr. Stoffels.

Die geboue wat omskep is in Drommedaris Laerskool in 1964 was vantevore 'n Indiër laerskool. Hierdie skool het teen die laat 1930's tot stand gekom. Mnr. JRD Saldanha was die hoof van hierdie skool in die 1950's.[2] Hy is opgevolg deur mnr. Richard MacClean.

Mnr. Jim Abrams en Reigerpark Primêre Skool

Mnr. James (Jim) Abrams het diep spore in die onderwys getrap. Op 19 Mei 2019 het hy 89 jaar oud geword, 'n paar maande voor 'n onderhoud op 27 Augustus vir hierdie publikasie. Sy geheue was steeds skerp. Hy beskryf homself as 'n redelik stil en private persoon wat gefokus het op sy pligte in die skool en in die kerk.

Hy is in Dukathole, Germiston gebore en het daar grootgeword. Hulle was agt sibbe, vier broers en vier susters. Sy pa kom vanaf Venterstad en sy ma het op Elsburg, net langs Germiston, grootgeword waar hulle 'n groot erf gehad het. Hy onthou dat sy pa 'n diaken in die Ebenezer Kerk op Elsburg was.

In Germiston het hulle aanvanklik in die Cape Stands gewoon en later na Twaalfdestraat 70 verhuis. Die lokasie het uit drie dele bestaan: onder het die Indiërs gewoon, in die middel die swart mense en bo, in die Cape Stands, naby die National Chemical Products (NCP) fabriek, die bruin mense. Baie van die swart trekarbeiders het op die nabye myn gewerk en in die hostel gewoon. Die bruin mense op die myn was hoofsaaklik nutsmanne wat bogronds gewerk het. Die swart mense en Indiërs het hul eie skole gehad, terwyl die bruin mense aanvanklik kerksale gebruik het, dié van die Ebenezer en die NG Kerk. Na standerd vyf kon die bruin leerlinge van Dukathole na een van twee hoërskole gaan: William Hills Hoërskool in Benoni of Krausestraat Hoërskool in Fordsburg. Mnr. Abrams het laasgenoemde gekies. Hy het sy onderwyskwalifikasie by die opleidingskool net langsaan die hoërskool, die Eurafrican Training Centre (ETC), voltooi. Later het hy sy BCom-graad deur Unisa voltooi.

Sy onderwysloopbaan het in 1953 op Germiston begin; daarna het hy dit voortgesit op Oosrand Hoër en toe op Payneville, Springs, waar hy eers waarnemende hoof en toe hoof was. In 1976 word hy die hoof op Reigerpark Laerskool tot met sy uittrede in 1990. Hy en sy gesin het in 1973 uit Germiston na Reigerpark verhuis. Terwyl hy op Oosrand Hoër onderwys het, het hy daagliks saam met mnr. Jordaan Reigerpark toe gereis. Hy het daarna eers per trein Springs toe gependel en later 'n kombi gekoop. Mnre. Klou en Kirkman en mev. Peffer het ook daar onderwys en saam met hom gereis. Op Oosrand Hoër was mnr. Abrams onder andere die rekeningkundeonderwyser. Cecil Morden onthou hom as knap en streng, 'n onderwyser wat nie nonsens van leerders gevat het nie.

Mev. Audrey Abrams is van Worcester afkomstig en volgens haar het sy nogal moeilik in die destydse Transvaal aangepas. Tydens haar grootwordjare was daar nog nie 'n hoërskool op Worcester nie en die leerders moes elders hul hoërskoolloopbaan gaan voltooi. Sy was baie verbaas om te hoor dat 'n familievriend en een van hul gemeentelede, mnr. Davie Wathen, die bynaam Matjoppie aan Cecil Morden gegee het.

Mnr. Abrams moedig die inwoners van Reigerpark aan om altyd 'n positiewe gesindheid te openbaar. Hy is trots op die gemeenskap wat ten spyte van vele uitdagings nog altyd mekaar bygestaan het. Hul samehorigheidsgevoel is vir hom 'n riem onder die hart.

Reigerpark Primêre Skool was die eerste nuwe skool wat gebou is om die groot aantal leerlinge wat in die woonbuurt ingetrek het, te akkommodeer. Die skool het in 1964 geopen met mnr. Clarence

Die personeel van Reigerpark Primêre Skool in die laat-1970's met mnr. Jim Abrams as skoolhoof (Reigerpark Primêre Skool)

September as hoof. Hy is later opgevolg deur mnr. Noah van Johannesburg. Na hom het mnr. Abrams hoof geword en toe mnr. Charles Billings. Die skool het oor die jare baie toegewyde onderwysers en onderwyseresse gehad. Name soos mnre. Talbots Henry, William Greeff, Sydney Beck, Graham Musson, en Robert (Bob) Swarts word vandag nog onthou, en onder die dames was onder meer juffrouens Maria E Eustace, Miela Swarts, Baby Thompson, Judy Thomas, Noelene Billings (geb. Botha), Myrtel Clements, Brenda Anderson en Ria Petersen (geb. De Jager). Die *Reiger Park Bulletin* het in 2020 'n profiel geplaas oor 'n afgetrede departementshoof by Reigerpark Primêr, mnr. James Minnaar, wat op 9 Junie daardie jaar sy tagtigste verjaardag gevier het en op daardie stadium steeds aktief in die Rooms-Katolieke Kerk betrokke was. Mnr. Minnaar het 30 jaar se onderwys-ervaring agter die blad. Die huidige hoof is mnr. ME Green.

LAKESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL
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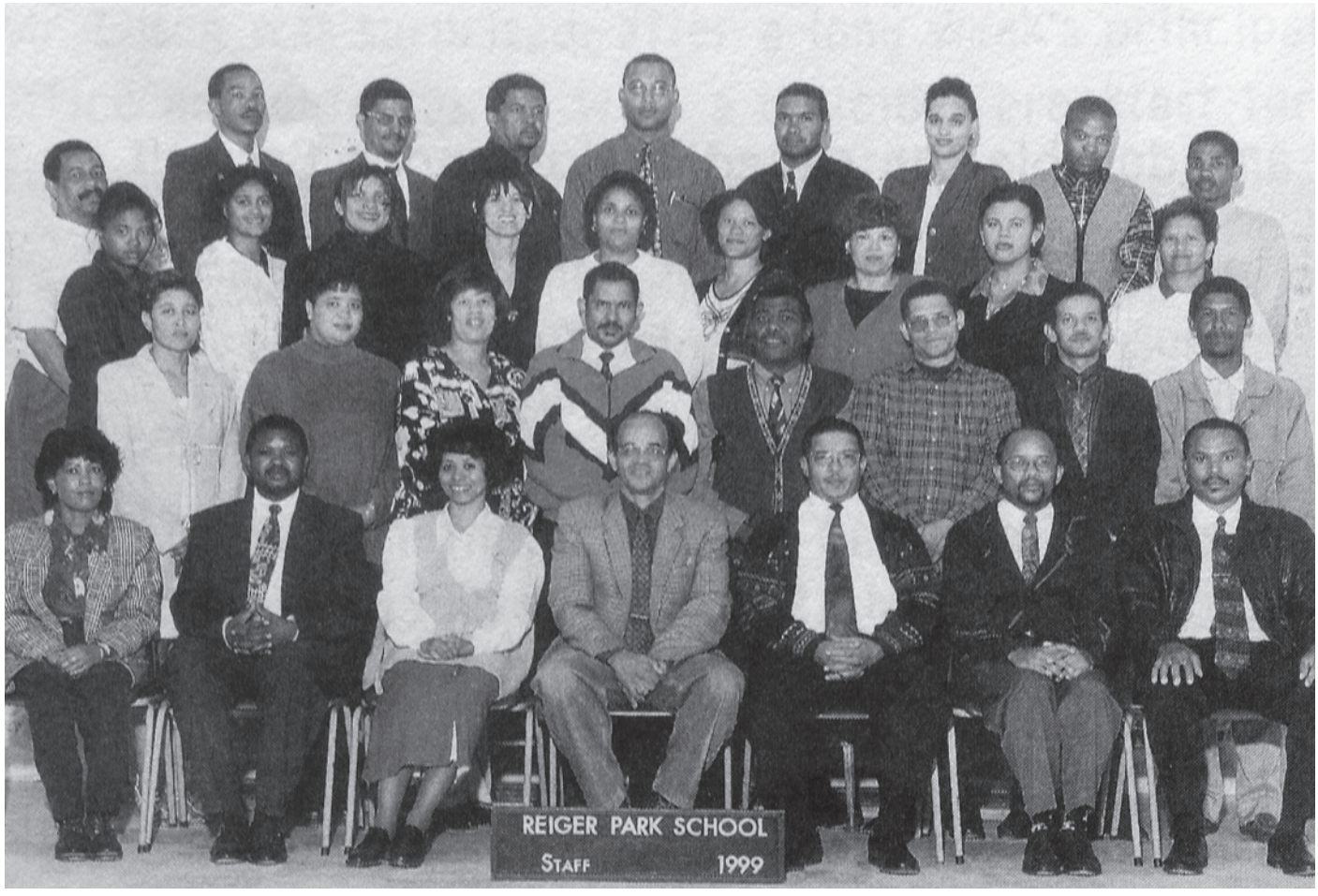
Lakeside Primêre Skool, gestig 1980 met mnr. FJD Cupido as die eerste skoolhoof. Mnr. 'Zorro' Abdul was die skoolhoof in 2002 (Lakeside Primêre Skool).

Lakeside Primêre Skool het in 1980 geopen met mnr. FJD Cupido as die eerste hoof. Die amptelike opening van die skool was eers op 27 Oktober 1984. Van die latere hoofde was mnre. Ernest Usher en "Zorro" Abdul. Die huidige hoof is mnr. CT Jansen.



Personeel van Reigerpark Sekondêre Skool: Voorste ry: mev. C McQuin, A Plaaitjies, mev. M du Preez, V Olsen (skoolhoof), L Barlow, R Tekana en B Kotzen. Tweede ry: mev. F Adolph,mev. B Solomons, mev J Wills, H Williams, P Lemmetjies, V Varrie, B Clements en E Fick. Derde ry: me. C Greene, me. Y van Dyk, me. R Hufké, mev. I du Plessis, mev. V Bellairs, mev. R Azevedo, mev. H Rankwana, me. M Jansen en mev. J Domingo. Agterste ry: D Benjamin, J Pietersen, P Fray, R Adolph, J Goss, C Gameson, mev. C Adams, P Phahla en S Ford.

Reiger Park Sekondêre Skool is in 1993 geopen met graad neges vanaf Oosrand Sekondêr en graad sewes van die vier laerskole in die gebied, met mnr. Winston Milton aan die stuur tot 1996. Die eerste groep matriekleerders het die matriekeksamen in 1996 afgelê. Mnr. Milton is opgevolg deur mnre. Vincent Gilroy Olsen (1997–2002), Wynand Dercksen (2003, waarnemend), Gregory Fisch (2004–17), Raymond Tekana (2018–19, waarnemend), Shawn Martins (2020–13 Augustus 2021) en Raymond Tekana, waarnemende hoof vanaf 16 Augustus 2021 tot hede.

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Tom Kivedo: Speurder van Reigerpark

Cecil H Morden

Tom Kivedo het vir ’n hele aantal jare saam met Abraham Morden as speurder gewerk. Sy ouers het in Stirtonville gewoon lank voor die gebied Reigerpark geword het. Na sy oudste suster se geboorte het sy ouers egter vir ’n ruk lank na Richmond in die Karoo getrek, waar hy gebore is. Hulle het later teruggetrek na B-straat, Stirtonville, omdat sy pa op die myn kom werk het. Later het hulle na Galeview verhuis. Tom voltooi sy laerskooljare aan die Boksburg Kleurlingskool en verlaat William Hills Hoërskool in 1962 nadat hy standerd 7 voltooi het.

In 1967 het hy by die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie aangesluit. In 1969 trou hy en betrek hy sy ouerhuis in Galeview nadat sy ouers na MM verhuis het. Hy voltooi sy opleiding aan die Polisiekollege in Bishop Lavis in die Kaap. Na sy opleiding doen hy vir ’n jaar diens in die Paarl voordat hy terugkeer na Boksburg. In 1972 word hy ’n speurder. Humphrey Phillips was toe die ander bruin speurder met Abraham Morden wat kort daarna by die Boksburgse speurtak aangesluit het.

Volgens Tom in ’n onderhoud op 9 November 2020 was daar tydens sy kinderjare nie juis noemenswaardige bendebedrywighede in Stirtonville nie. Toe nuwe intrekkers uit ander dele van die Oos-Rand, Benoni en Germiston in die 1960’s hul intrek geneem het, het bendegeweld ernstige afmetings begin aanneem. As speurders was dit hul strategie om gesoekte bendelede in die vroeë oggendure, tussen 01:00 en 02:00, te gaan opklop. Hy onthou bendes soos die Tigers, Commodores, Serpents en Fire Boys. Dan was daar ook die Vultures voordat hy by die polisie aangesluit het.

Tom noem dat die gemeenskap dikwels leidrade oor moontlike betrokkenes by grumisdade aan hulle verskaf het, wat hul taak baie vergemaklik het. Hy onthou hoe hulle ’n moordsaak geopen het, maar sonder ’n lyk, en vir vier dae na die vermoorde Claude Bartelson se liggaam gesoek het. ’n Verdagte genaamd Bell, oorspronklik van Durban, het na ondervraging die lyk gaan uitwys. ’n Ander moord wat aanvanklik ’n raaisel was, was dié van ’n jong

vrou wat op die oop vlaktes waar Ramaphosaville vandag is, aangetref is. Uiteindelik kon hy en speurder Morden die saak oplos en uitvind dat sy van Eldoradopark was. Haar gewese kêrel is later aan haar moord skuldig bevind .

'n Saak wat veral op Abraham Morden 'n uitwerking gehad het, is dié van Winston Bennet. Hy en Morden het Bennet in John Collinsstraat vir 'n "simpel" saak aangekeer, aldus Tom. Bennet het hom teen arrestasie verset en met 'n mes op Morden afgestorm. Hulle het hom gewaarsku, maar hy wou nie gehoor gee nie. 'n Skoot of twee is afgevuur en Bennet is op die toneel dood. Vir Morden was dit die enigste voorval van sy soort in sy loopbaan, sover as wat sy oudste seun, Cecil, kan onthou. Dit het speurder Morden slapelose nagte besorg. Wat hierdie ongelukkige voorval moeiliker gemaak het, was dat Bennet se tante, sy ma se suster, die Mordens se onmiddellike buurvrou was.

'n Speurder wat later by hulle aangesluit het, het baie moeilikheid veroorsaak omdat hy met van die bendelede bevriend was en hulle vooraf gewaarsku het wanneer optredes teen hulle beplan is. Dié speurder is uiteindelik na die uniformtak teruggepos, maar nie voordat hy Tom in 'n lokval gelei het wat hom amper sy lewe gekos het nie. Tom het in 1984 stasiebevelvoerder op Geluksdal geword en in 1990 op Reigerpark. Hy het in 1993 uit die polisiediens bedank en daarna as veiligheidsbeampte by die Suid-Afrikaanse Lugdiens gaan werk.

Vir Tom Kivedo was dit 'n eer om die gemeenskap van Reigerpark te dien. Hy waardeer die respek wat aan hom betoon is en beskou dit as 'n hoogtepunt. 'n Laagtepunt was die voorval toe sy kollega hom in 'n lokval gelei het wat byna noodlottige gevolge gehad het. Hy is nie baie beïndruk met die huidige polisiebeamptes in die gebied nie. Hy reken hulle is nie behoorlik opgelei nie, doen nie genoeg patrolliewerk nie en is juis daarom nie sigbaar nie. Vandag, veel erger as in die verlede, is die onwettige handel in dwelms een van die hoofoorsake van bendegeweld. Daar is ook gevalle waar dossiere verdwyn, 'n teken van korrupsie in die polisiediens, en die feit dat van die lede met die bendelede "bevriend" is. Die Polisieforum in die gebied kan, syns insiens, baie meer effektief wees, maar die wíl van owerheidsweë ontbreek.

Tom noem dat hy en Morden een keer na Heilbron op pad was om 'n beskuldigde te gaan haal, en dat sy kollega met hom oor die Bybel gepraat het. Hy het die boodskap tóé nie ter harte geneem nie, maar 'n saadjie is geplant. In sy aftreejare besef hy dat die genade van die Here met hom was en steeds is. Sy vrou, Vinolia (geb. Chudayan) het hom 'n paar jaar gelede ontval en nou hou sy kleinkinders hom besig.

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A rebel with a cause

Alfred Woodington

"[Alfred Woodington] was a complex person, but he loved us and was concerned about the poor. He was passionate about his country and had a sense of integrity. He was principled and had passion to protect fundamental human rights."

– Judge Mahomed Navsa[1]

Monday, April 6, 2020 – lockdown. South Africa is going through its worst crisis ever.[2] I have heard of drought, pestilence, war and famine. This, however, is a 21st century pandemic that started in China and has ravaged the world. Cities all over the world are under lockdown. People are confined to their living spaces, and under exceptional conditions may go to the shop for basic foodstuff or a chemist for medication. I have decided to spend this time to record my memory of the life I have lived up to the age of 62.

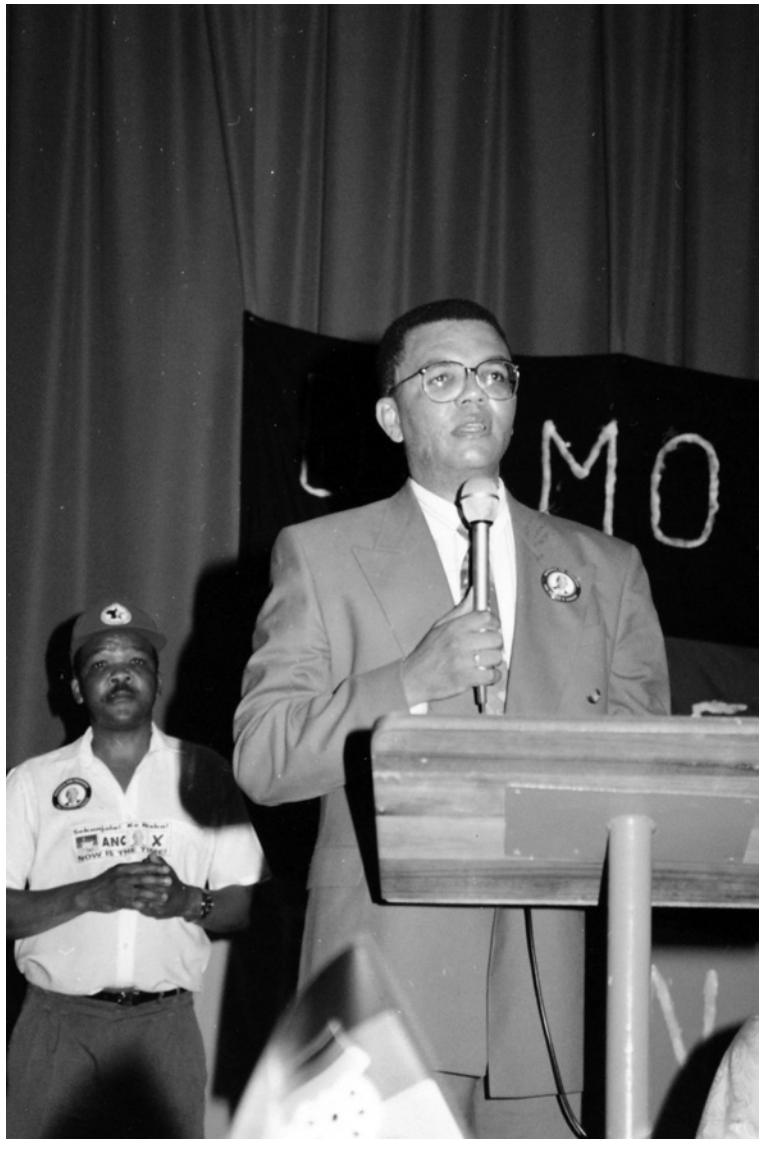
The Woodingtons

Somewhere around 1860 Tom Woodington arrived in the Cape Colony. He was accompanied by two other men with the same surname. Tom was my great-grandfather. I have very little knowledge about the other two men.

Tom had four children, Alfred (Freddy), Patrick, Edward and Sophie. Freddy was my grandfather. His children were James, Amy, Sanna and Abram, my father. My grandmother was Sarah Woodington. All four children were born at All Saints Mission in the Engcobo (now Ngcobo) district of the Cape Colony. Abram married Frances Kleinhans and they had seven children; Harry (b. 2 June 1947), Elizabeth (b. 11 October 1949), Christian (b. 15 November 1953), Maureen (b. 27 March 1956), Alfred – that's me – (b. 1 February 1958), Roger (b. 12 August 1960) and Denzil (b. October 1963). Frances and Abram

separated in 1965. On 15 April 1970 Linda Sarah Woodington was born to Abram from another relationship.

I was taken in by my maternal grandmother, Ivy Kleinhans, at the age of four years. I was raised by both my grandmother and my aunt Nelly (Sista) Kleinhans. In 1962, with the 'independence' of the Transkei under the leadership of brothers Kaizer and George Matanzima, my maternal grandmother decided to move her whole family to what was then known as the Transvaal. The reason for her decision was that tribal chauvinism amongst the Xhosa people was on the rise. Being of racially mixed background she felt that our family had no future in the Transkei. My parental grandfather, Freddy Woodington, had been a mineworker in the Boksburg area in the 1920s and some of the Woodingtons had settled first in Comet and thereafter in Stirtonville. In 1963 we moved to Stirtonville Location in Boksburg, Transvaal. Two years later, in 1965, Stirtonville was classified a Coloured township in terms of the apartheid legislation.



Alfred Woodington (Links collection).

Settling in Stirtonville

We arrived in Stirtonville on 18 January 1963, a Friday. We stayed with Mrs Ivy Woodington at 414 Ramashala Street. Ivy was the wife of John Woodington, a cousin of my grandfather. Soon thereafter we moved to a two-room structure, part of 52 Molota Street. By 1965 we moved once more to 1196 Thompson Street, a three-room (kitchen and two bedrooms) council house. This would become my home for the duration of my schooling and teenage years.

By 1966 my mother and my four remaining siblings also moved from Engcobo to Stirtonville, which was then renamed Reiger Park Coloured Township. One sister, Maureen, had passed away during infancy and my older sister Elizabeth had come earlier with me and our youngest uncle, Dudley, in 1963. My mother got the house right next door, 1197 Thompson Street, but for practical reasons I continued to stay with my grandmother. My grandmother was 55 years old in 1965. She was born "ngey, 10 ka Sektemba, 1910", she often reminded us! Sis Ivy, my grandma, passed away in 1973 when I was 15 years old. Dudley, who had married in the meantime, took over the household with his wife Mary (née Fernholdt).

I experienced a strange feeling during that time.

Dudley and Mary had their own new family, but I could not let go of their household. An arrangement was made that I would do everything at my mother's house next door, but continue to sleep at number 1196.

Goede Hoop Primary School

When we settled in Stirtonville in January 1963 I was nearly 5 years of age but had to wait until the following year to be enrolled at Stirtonville Coloured Primary School. I spent this year partly with my grandmother in the township and with my aunt Nelly Kleinhans in Lyttleton (Pretoria), where she did domestic work. She taught me how to count and write my name. Her employers were the Niemands of Van de Venter Street. At the beginning of 1964 my grandmother took me to Mr John Collins, the principal of Stirtonville Coloured Primary School, but I was rejected. We did not realize that my initial rejection was based on my inability to speak 'proper' Afrikaans. In 1965 the school was renamed Goede Hoop Primary School. That year at the age of seven I was accepted and registered. My class teacher in Sub A was Miss Ria de Jager. The class was made up of kids of different shapes, colours and ages. My accent became a playground joke. One tall, very dark-skinned and older chap gave me the name 'Inkawu', which at the time was a derogatory word for people, mostly Africans, with albinism. Initially I did not know the meaning of it, but I knew it amused other kids, especially when I spoke.

I don't know at what point I became aware of social classes. I know that Mr Collins refused to enrol me because of my accent. I also became aware of ''different strokes for different folks'' at the same primary school. After two years in Lyttleton, learning to speak Afrikaans and English, counting match sticks and 'reading' teen magazines from the Niemand household, I came back well prepared and well equipped, so much so that teachers in Sub A would 'abuse' me by sending me to the shops, ''because you already know the work." Even the principal, Mr John Collins (Oom Tiet), asked me to learn to ride his bicycle in order to sometimes fetch his cheese and tomato sandwiches from home. Despite that, when they had to promote children to Sub B, I was overlooked. At that stage I was already a year behind because I was only accepted into Sub A at age 7. I got the impression that if you were not from a wealthy family or had a popular father, you would always remain in the slow lane. After the initial bad experience I did well at primary school and passed all my grades.

Oosrand High School

In high school I again felt discriminated against. Passing standard 6 easily, Miss Alma de Jager, my class teacher, advised me to choose the academic stream and to take maths and science. I refused. At high school you met kids coming from other primary schools. Some of the kids were poor performers, but because they had well-known parents they were included in the academic stream. My refusal to join the academic stream was also partly a result of the arrogance of a lot of those kids. They basically felt that with influential parents their paths were paved with gold and they did not have to work hard. I refused to be associated with them. The kids in the general stream were mostly poor, with working class or single parents. Hence, being from the latter group, I refused her advice and chose my subjects from the general stream instead.[3]

My high school years (from 1973 to 1975) were uneventful, until 1976. This was the year African pupils in Soweto took to the streets in protest against being forced to accept Afrikaans as language of instruction. Although this generated debate at Oosrand High, it did not turn into full blown protest action at the school.

One of my teachers, Mr Attlee Clements, always acted in a provocative manner. It did not come as a surprise when he accused me of 'threatening to assault' him. I was brought before the principal,

Mr Johnny Wathen, and subsequently expelled. It was 1976 and I was in standard 9. My family sent me to East London to complete my schooling at John Bisseker High School. However, the principal, Mr S Naidoo, refused to accept me and I had to return to Reiger Park. In 1977 the principal, Mr Wathen, offered me the opportunity to proceed with my matric at Oosrand High; I could attend classes but had to enrol as an external candidate. I did not exactly know what it meant to be an external candidate, because I attended classes as all other kids and even attended the matric ball. I unfortunately failed and eventually passed matric when I wrote a supplementary examination in 1979.

Nelly (Sista) Kleinhans / Heyns / August – my other mom

Sista (Nelly), my other mom, had left Lyttleton and took up various other jobs closer to home. Sista was a divorcee who had been married for a short while to a guy named Japhta Heyns. She went by the official name of Nelly Heyns. What I did not realise at that young age was that the mother-son relationship has fully transferred from Frances Woodington to Nelly Heyns. For all intents and purposes Nelly (Sista) was my mother. She had no children of her own and poured her motherly love onto me and all my cousins, the children of her two brothers, Arthur and Dudley. Arthur (Zat) was just younger than Sista but older than Dudley. He was the first to get married and move out of the house. He and Sista were in the Transvaal years before us and worked and saved to pay for our relocation.

Sista had a few relationships which did not seem to last long. However, in 1969 she met up with a former homeboy, whose father was the school principal in Engcobo. This relationship almost changed her into a different person. From renting a garage in the upper-class part of Reiger Park, they eventually rented a council flat, E10, in a new development. She had a steady job at Spar in Benoni and he had a well-paying office job at Haggie Rand (African Wire Ropes at the time) in Cleveland. What I enjoyed most about this relationship is that he took a lot of interest in my education and development. We would forever play question-and-answer games based on general knowledge; he would discuss recent events like the moon landing or take me with him to his work on a weekend. The two of them even accompanied me as my parents to the Oosrand High School matric ball at the end of 1977. Somewhere between 1979 and 1981 things started going wrong after one of his sons (from a previous relationship) came to stay with them. Two other children came to visit and it was not long thereafter that he suddenly packed his bags and left for Cape Town, where the rest of his family resided. Sista was shattered.

As I had found employment I offered to come and stay with her so that she can retain the flat, but she refused, saying that such an arrangement would upset my biological mother. After giving up the flat she drifted from relative to relative. At some point, I am not sure when, she met James August. They married and moved into a house that belonged to his parents. She remained there until her death in January 2005.

The bond between Sista and I that started in 1963 lasted beyond her death. I still regard her as my mother as she was the woman who took my hand and led me across a busy street, the woman who taught me to count, the woman who in the absence of funds, would have handsewn my clothing, the woman I could go to anytime I had problems. Whenever I visited her, I would usually come back with something nice for the stomach, such as roasted pork and potatoes.

Uncle Arthur (Zat)

When we arrived from Engcobo in 1963 we were met at Germiston Railway station by my uncle Arthur (Zat as we called him) and some of his friends. Prince Dickens, Sista's boyfriend at the time, drove us to Stirtonville in his car.

When I saw uncle Zat for the first time I greeted him accordingly. He very sternly told me not to call him uncle and to just call him Zat. Although the age difference between us was 18 years, that was what he wanted and I honoured his wish until he passed away in 1993. Dudley is 11 years my senior and Elizabeth 9 years. There were therefore further issues around how they should be addressed.
Zat was an ardent reader. I had to collect/buy the newspaper for him over weekends. We would share reading the newspaper: he, the news and sports sections, and I the cartoons and other parts of the paper. One of the papers he bought was *The Sunday Express*. This paper had a property section and for some reason I always fantasised owning one of those houses. It obviously was impossible then, as dictated by apartheid laws. Maybe it was the house of the Niemands in Van de Venter Street, Lyttleton, that was the cause of my fantasy. The other paper was *The Sunday Times*, which had a crossword competition that I completed. Dudley provided money for a postcard so that I could enter my answer. I had this belief that one day I would win this competition and buy one of those houses. My grandmother would then sit on her veranda with her cup of Koffiehuis and enjoy the sun.

Zat never refused any of my requests. If he could not afford it immediately, he would say: "Let me speak to Sarah (his wife), and see if we can make a plan." Between Sista, Zat and Dudley they basically saw to my every youthful need. When I was 14 years old, I negotiated with Dudley to buy me camping equipment and promised in return to wash his Ford Anglia for two months. The deal was sealed and on a Monday during school holidays two friends and I set off on foot to Putfontein, Benoni, for a week-long camp. I was kitted out in full: rucksack, warm khaki cloths, Dudley's old boots, a knife, fork and spoon set, tinned food and some money. I still have the knife, fork and spoon set. We stayed the whole week and returned on the Sunday. I discovered afterwards that during my camping adventure my grandmother's nerves were in tatters.

At my request Sista bought me a pair of soccer boots, which unfortunately turned out to be rugby boots. So Zat, who was a Highlands Park fan, intervened and bought me the real stuff. My soccer days were mostly spent in Actonville, in the non-racial Federation Soccer League. Apart from me, other players from Reiger Park were the Bham cousins Yasien and Hoosain, the sons of Ismail Bham, and Idries and Hanief, the sons of Essop Bham (Jaaps).

Since my youth I was exposed to people of different races. I was born in a predominantly Xhosa village and raised in a township that included Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Chinese. There was even a White family, the De Wets, who had a smallholding first in the township and later just outside of the racially demarcated borders, on the other side of the Cinderella dam. Other elements of urban township life included the gangs, shiny cars, shebeens, yard sessions (usually live bands playing in somebody's backyard), the beer hall, the compound, i.e., the mine hostel, mineworkers, mine dumps and mineshafts. Then there were the brass bands, church choirs, Boys Brigade, traditional healers and the different churches. Organised sports included soccer, netball and tennis. Christmas celebrations are remembered for homes being decorated, nice dishes being prepared and new outfits to be worn. My most memorable Christmas event was a Christmas tree organised by the Methodist Church on the corner of Mgilane and Church Streets, a quaint little zinc structure with a church bell in the front courtyard. Sarah took me along as they were Methodists, although we were Anglicans. My Christmas present was a little concrete mixer truck.

Zat and Dudley both loved music. Zat was more into Black American and local soul music. Sweet Inspirations, Percy Sledge, Brook Benton, The Staccatos and The All Rounders were synonymous with him. For Dudley it was The Beatles and The

Mamas and Papas, but the Bee Gees topped his list. All of that plus a mixture of Jimmy Swaggart and Gus Whyburd made up this potpourri of sounds.

That was my youth. Lots of love, adventure, music, reading and dreaming.

Working life

At the beginning of 1978 I found a job as a quality inspector at a food canning factory, Langeberg Co-operation (1978–80). Later I was employed at Dorbyl, a steel factory in Germiston (1980–81). A few months later I was fired for 'loitering' in the change rooms for too long. (We had a meeting.) My third job was at a shopfitting establishment where I was employed as an estimator. Here too I was a square peg in a round hole. I was dismissed after losing my temper with an overbearing manager. By 1984 I was into my fourth job, managed to purchase my first car and got married. It was at this point that my life took a dramatic turn, from incidental to organized politics. I joined the Metal and Allied Workers Union (Mawu, 1987–94) and rose to become a shop steward in a relatively short time. Mawu later became part of Numsa, the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa.

Struggle against bosses, the State and reactionary forces

Organizing workers in the metal industry was not only tough, it was dangerous. Bosses would not hesitate to fire workers for any petty reason, as long as they could get rid of any sign of militance. Workers that were not properly trained in being a member of, and understanding the dangers of trade unionism in the 1980s, would not hesitate to blame (or even kill) those they thought were responsible for their loss of income during strikes. There were also those who violently resisted unionism, claiming that unions did not pay their salaries. The latter were mostly migrant workers.

When the call was made by the ANC in 1985 to render the country ungovernable, the unions were the only organised formations strong enough to cause serious damage to the economy. Worker leaders and union officials were obvious targets for the Security Branch. We might not have known, or we did not care, but we were under constant surveillance, together with those close to us. In 1987 I became a full-time official of the union and was responsible for the Boksburg and Benoni areas. This meant I had to organise both the industrial areas and work with community structures to achieve the objective of rendering the country ungovernable. Daveyton, Wattville, Actonville, Reiger Park and Vosloorus became key operational areas.

Mysterious deaths occurred since the early 1980s. We would be told of a worker whose body was found at a taxi rank, bus stop or train station. Sometimes workers would be killed in shebeens or any other social setting. At first we thought they were victims of random criminal acts until we discovered that there was a pattern to these deaths. During this time Mawu was also fighting one of the longest strikes in its history. British Tyres and Rubber was a company whose labour pool came from a township in Natal, Mphophomeni. The type of killings we saw on the East Rand was very similar to the killings that happened between supporters of this strike and those opposing it (Inkatha). The largest number of deaths on the East Rand was amongst Zulu speaking hostel dwellers and even township dwellers from Natal. We only had two choices: back-off from this group or intensify the organisational / political work amongst hostel dwellers, other migrant workers and the Inkatha faction. We chose to intensify.

This strategy obviously had to take into account the dangers and make the necessary preparation. We slowly began to acquire small arms, train shop stewards and isolate difficult characters amongst the Inkatha group by emphasising worker unity and the power of collective bargaining. It seemed like this was having the opposite effect: Inkatha became more violent and started using semi-automatic arms.

Numsa office gutted in R300 000 blaze

By Claire Fitzgerald and Sapa

AN estimated R300 000 damage was caused by a fire which gutted the Johannesburg local office of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (Numsa) yesterday morning.

A number of documents pertaining to disputes pending in the industrial court and industrial council were destroyed in the blaze, which apparently broke out at 1.45 am.

Mr Alfred Woodington, co-ordinator of Numsa's crisis unit, said that the documents, which covered information of 30 000 members, were stored in a filing cabinet in one section of the office. He added that those responsible for the fire had first opened the cabinet in order to obtain the documents.

The Johannesburg local office was the biggest of the local offices of Numsa and all that remained in the office was burnt-out shells of fax machines, desks and the steel frames of plastic chairs, several chairs were apparently brought up from the basement of the building to facilitate the rapid spreading of the fire.

Mr Woodington disregarded the possibility that any of the structures of the union were ettensive.

"We have been put back about four months. We have to start a new recording system and if workers lose their cases in the industrial courts because of the loss of this correspondence, it will prove to be disruptive.

"We have a national congress in May and a Cosatu congress in July and all this needs preparation," Mr Woodington added.

Mr Woodington disregarded the possibility that any of the "liberation movements" were responsible for the fire and suggested that a "third force that operates in State structures" was responsible for the fire.

"It will, however, not break our organisation and it is simply angering the workers against the forces that are militating against their interests. It will serve as an impetus" he said.

"According to the fire department there is an 80 percent chance that the fire was deliberately started and the possibility of it being caused by an electrical fault is minimal," Mr Woodington said.

A spokesman for the fire department was, however, reluctant to comment on this as the incident is still being investigated.

"It takes a while to establish the cause of fires in this kind of situation and there are many possibilities," the spokesman said.

Mysterious fire and deaths often occurred during the late 1980s and early 1990s. (*Citizen*, January 1991).

Only years later would it be confirmed that some of the members of Inkatha were secretly trained and armed by the former SADF and Security Branch.

Some of the information of this training leaked.

I was assigned to investigate two camps in Northern Natal and if possible, recruit some of the staff. The camps were at Jozini and Mkuze. Both camps were close to the Mozambican and Swaziland borders and were used as springboards into these two neighbouring countries by the South African Defence Force (SADF). I succeeded in recruiting eight SADF members; three were later arrested for passing sensitive information. They served prison terms. I have never been able to make contact with them or their families.

During the mid to late 1980s the East Rand had become the focal point of violence between hostel and township dwellers, from Daveyton, Wattville and Kathlehong to Thokoza. At hostels in Wattville and Daveyton we had a strong presence and could act quite effectively against troublemakers. Partly due to this success I was instructed by the Numsa leadership, in consultation with other Mass Democratic Movement structures, to move to the head office in 1989. Here I took on the responsibility to lead the so-called Welfare Unit. One of my colleagues at this unit was Richard Ntuli. I intervened in every violent incident affecting the union. The Vaal region erupted in early 1990.

Massacres

I had to accompany friends and family to massacre sites for identification purposes. At one stage the Germiston mortuary did not have enough space for all the bodies. This was a very traumatic experience for us.

I visited various massacre sites: Hokaai taxi rank and Scaw Metals in Wadeville, numerous sites of train killings between Kwesine and Germiston, and along the Johannesburg-Germiston-Springs railway line, the Boipatong attack site, and the Sebokeng-Nangalembe funeral massacre. During the Bisho march I was a protector for Moses Mayekiso. Between 1990 and 1996 we registered at least one death every day.

Police harassment and attempts on our lives

I was detained between October 1988 and January 1989, but never charged. After my release I joined Umkhonto we Sizwe and completed my basic military training in Transkei. In April 1989 somebody fired teargas into the Numsa office in Benoni while we were planning May Day activities. On one

occasion, during the night, a black cat's throat was slit and hung over my front door in Reiger Park. A huge army trailer loaded with tyres was left on my lawn one night. I once found my wife, Norah, in a hysterical state. She told me somebody called to say my body was at the Boksburg mortuary and that she had to go and identify it. On 29 June 1989 Norah died in a mysterious car accident. The TRC later ruled that she was a victim of apartheid violence. Four months after my wife's death a bullet penetrated our roof and landed between my son and I as we stood in the kitchen. Once a truck rammed into my car on the Soweto Highway, but I managed to drive away unhurt.

Other affiliations and employment

In the 1980s I was a member of the Reiger Park Ratepayers and Tenants Association, which later became a UDF affiliate. When the ANC was unbanned in 1990 I was drafted into the Union Security Apparatus and became a member of the PWV Peace Committee.

I was a member of the negotiating team to form the Boksburg Transitional Local Authority to help usher in the first democratic local government elections in 1995, and chairperson of the Boksburg ANC from 1992 to 1996.[4]

I resigned from Numsa in 1994 and took up the position of security manager at Spoornet, a division of Transnet. I held this position until 1998. In 1998 I became an ANC Member of Parliament for a relatively short period (20 July 1998–26 March 1999) and served on the Safety and Security and Defence Committees and also on the Joint Standing Committee on Defence.

In October 1999 I started my own small business, the Junction Jazz Club, in Leeuwpoort Street, Boksburg, which I successfully managed until 2020. I served as ANC Ekurhuleni PR councillor between 2001 and 2006, but stood unsuccessfully as ward councillor in ward 32 during the 2011 municipal elections.

Alfred Woodington in the press

This is a brief summary of some of the newspaper clippings collected in one of Alfred Woodington's files. In 1992 *The Sunday Star* reported on a meeting of one of the many peace committees that were established during South Africa's exciting and yet troubling transition period (1990 to 1994).[5] Alfred was a member of the Actonville, Benoni, Boksburg, Daveyton, Reiger Park and Wattville Local Dispute Resolution Committee (ABBDRW- LDRC). The committee met in the Benoni Town Hall with the co-chairmen Ken Brown, a former mayor of Benoni, and Con Roux, MD of a construction company, guiding the meeting. *The Star* reporter made a very apt observation: "This is where war gives way to jaw, and no matter how great the shortcomings of jaw, rather it than the other thing." The reporter also noted: "Today, Roux and Brown are greatly assisted in this matter (to ensure the smooth running of the meeting) by one Alfred Woodington, Cosatu's roving ambassador to the peace committees. Woodington wouldn't do as chairman – so close to one main party – but he is 24-carat back-up and his frequent sound and gentle suggestions win general respect."

The Sun Beam of June 1994 reported on a truce which the Rev Harold Brooks of the Methodist Church of Reiger Park and Alfred Woodington, in his capacity as chairman of the ANC Boksburg branch, negotiated between rival gangs in Reiger Park.[6] The Sour Boys and The Foster Gang agreed to cease hostilities and jointly make constructive contributions to the community.

In December 1994 the *Beeld* reported on a service held at the Central Methodist Church in Johannesburg officiated by the Rev Peter Storey, who was also chairperson of the Champaign for a gun-free South Africa.[7] Alfred Woodington was pictured handing over an AK-47 to Rev Storey. All the weapons were to be destroyed.

In October 2020 the *Boksburg Advertiser* reported on a meeting with Woodington where he showed

them his collection of pictures on the history of Reiger Park.[8] His aim was to share his knowledge of the history of Reiger Park to help educate the younger generation. He also had an old map of Stirtonville and mentioned some of the renamed streets: Ndungwane to Leon Ferreira Street, Mabanga to Erica Street, Sikakani to Goedehoop Street and Thompson to September Street. The street names Stanbury, Tim, Vickers Crescent and Oxford were retained.

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Peter Henry Abrahams

Cecil H Morden

Peter Henry Abrahams (Deras), the internationally renowned South African writer, was born on 03 March 1919. The family stayed at 19th Street Vrededorp, Johannesburg. His mother Angelina du Plessis was classified coloured and his father James Henry Abrahamas Deras hailed from Ethiopia.[1] He grew up in a loving family: "(I) remember my mother and father merging into each other in my mind. Together, they were my symbol of peace and laughter and security."[2]

He was about five years old when his father died and he felt as if his world fell apart. "With his going, the order and stability that had been *in* my life, dissolved. There was no bread-winner so we had to leave the place that had been our home."[3] Soon after his father's death, Peter Abrahams moved to a small town, Elsburg, on the East Rand, where he stayed with distant family, Aunt Liza and Uncle Sam.

He describes the Elsburg of his tender years as follows:

> The houses were built in two lines, as they would be on either side of a wide road, each line facing the road. Only, there was no road. What could have been the road was a strip of land, dotted with mounds and potted with holes. Here and there footpaths had worn the grass away; here and there, children had, by constant playing on the same spot, created patches of dusty sand. The location stood on a rising between a valley on the one side and a river on the other. To the east and the west, the land sloped away gently.[4]

Elsburg is also the place where on the insistence of "a tall broad, white man" Uncle Sam had to trash his young charge with "a thick leather thong" with an involuntory rebuke, "No matter what happens, you must never lift your hand to a white person …"[5]

Two years later, at the age of seven, he returned to Vrededorp to stay with his aunt Mattie (Margaret). His mother had to look for work away from home. His schooling was at best erratic and by the age of eleven he was doing odd jobs and could not read or

write.[6] He "attended school regularly for three years" before finding employment at the Bantu Men's Social Centre as an 'office boy'.[7] Later he attended the Diocesan Training College in Grace Dieu near Pietersburg for a few years and subsequently completed his high school at St Peter's Secondary School, just outside Johannesburg, where Ezekiel (later: Es'kia) Mphahlele was one of his classmates.[8]

With the help of Father Woodfield he found work at the South African Institute for Race Relations. In 1938 he moved to Cape Town in search of new opportunities. He wrote some poems that were published in newspapers such as the *Standard* and the *Guardian* and was involved with the Liberation League. He also spent time working as a teacher. In June 1939 he arrived in Durban where he met up with the Liberal Study Group and became editor of their monthly bulletin. In September 1939 World War II broke out and later that year Abrahams boarded a ship for England and left South Africa for good, at the age of twenty. "I had to escape or slip into that negative destructiveness that is the offspring of bitterness and frustration," he wrote in his book, *Return to Goli*.[9] He briefly returned to South Africa in 1952 for a working six week visit on which this book is based.

Abrahams published his first full-length book, *Dark Testament*, a collection of short stories,

Peter Abrahams (Daniël du Plessis).

in 1942, and became one of the "most prolific African writers of the first half of the twentieth century".[10] In short succession he published *Song of the City* (1945), *Mine Boy* (1946), *Path of Thunder* (1948), *Wild Conquest* (1950) and *Wreath of Udomo* (1956). *Mine Boy* was the first to depict the dehumanizing effect of racism in South Africa and along with *Tell Freedom* ensured his international acclaim; both books remain in print.[11] Considered a seminal novel, *Mine Boy* was published two years before Alan Paton's acclaimed *Cry, The Beloved Country*, which also exposed the tragedy of apartheid."[12] In *Mine Boy* Abrahams asserts his enduring vision, that of 'man without colour', a world in which every man will be judged as an individual and where colour will be irrelevant.[13]

In 1955 Abrahams was on an assignment to Jamaica to write a popular history of the Island. The man who once lived in dire poverty in Elsburg on the East Rand found Jamaica closest to his ideal and moved there with his family in 1959. He married his second wife Daphne Elizabeth Miller on 1 June 1948. They had three children: Anne, Aron and Naomi. Abrahams died on 18 January 2017. At the time of his death *The New York Times* wrote that Abrahams's "journalism and novels explored, with sensitivity and passion, the injustices of apartheid and the complexities of racial politics."[14]

PART III

Triumph over adversity

A memoir

Anthony D Andrews

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The early years

Modder East, Benoni

A mining village situated on the north-east of Benoni on the Witwatersrand, that is where I first became aware of myself. At the age of three my first impressions were of myself and other children walking through mealie fields with stalks so tall and verdant they looked like fully grown trees. We were walking from my grandparents' home to my Uncle Peter's house, or 'Boeta' as we all called him because he was the eldest sibling.

The other incident from when I was a young boy that imprinted on me was a visit to the cowshed, seeing and smelling the cow dung that was ankle deep. I was hanging from a rafter, blissfully unaware of the dangers. My best recollection is of a pillion passenger on my grandpa's bicycle on our way to the mining compound. We stopped at the Jewish shop, and he bought treats including 'mangola', a type of local polony with red skin, red cold drinks, and red cakes. We proceeded to the amphitheatre where we were entertained by Zulu dancing. What stuck in my mind was the rhythmic African drumbeat, loud and repetitive, and the gyrating bodies exuding physicality and bravado accompanied by a high-pitched whistle. It was a cacophony.

Modder East would later achieve fame, or infamy, after the building of the Modderbee Prison at which the Delmas trialists were jailed. The Modder East village provided housing to families of Black miners, as opposed to the mining compound that accommodated single males recruited to dig the mines, sourced from within South Africa and neighbouring states.

Grandpa James Andrews was a gold miner who, with Grandma Martha (Marietjie), raised their family in Modder East. Grandpa James was originally from the Aliwal North district and Grandma Marietjie (née Geduld) from Potchefstroom. Their homestead was a modest three bedroom house with a lounge/dining room and a biggish kitchen. In the kitchen was a large Ellis de Luxe stove that kept the family warm during the cold Highveld winters. I remember helping my

grandma sell *magwinya (vetkoek)* to pupils lining up at the kitchen window. This was my first exposure to entrepreneurship. They had quite a big family, which was average for that time with no effective contraception, high infant mortality, and poor nutrition.

My mother's siblings

Grandpa James and Grandma Marietjie's first and second sons, Peter (Boeta) married to Kate and Barney married to Rose, were settled on the far East, in the township of Payneville in Springs. My mother, Sophie Elizabeth, was the eldest daughter. There was an infant death following Sophie and then Tarzan George was born, married to Doris (née Williams). Grace Cynthia, the next daughter, married Roy Simmers but got divorced and then married Harry Tekana. She was followed by Cyprian, the youngest son, who became a teacher. He married Honey Fredericks from Wakkerstroom. The last-born daughter, the *laatlam*, was given my grandma's name, Martha, but was called 'Kolletjie' because of a protruding mole dead centre between her eyebrows.

Boeta was the only miner following in the footsteps of Grandpa. Barney became an admin clerk after school but was a musician, playing by ear and raising a big family himself. His wife Rose was the entrepreneurial type raising extra cash by playing fafi, a Chinese game of chance, to feed the family. Sophie was the first female child in the family to get her junior certificate (JC), which in those days was an exit point from school. She was the ambitious type and Modder East was too small for her dreams. Grace was the loquacious one, eager to maximise income and have a better life. Cyprian, after getting his JC, trained as a teacher because that would assist him in his ambition for recognition and a being on the path to acceptance as a person of substance. As a keen musician he would lead big school and community choirs to greatness.

Martha (Kolletjie) never completed school as she took care of an ageing, insulin-dependent diabetic mother. She was also a surrogate mother for my sister Brenda (Lucy) and me. I was told that, in a fit of rage, she dropped me on the stove when I was a child and I still have the scar above my right eyebrow; but she was a very down-to-earth and well-loved individual. From Sophie down to Kolletjie, all the siblings moved to Benoni, Cape Section. Grandpa James owned, freehold, a wood-and-iron house at 62 Third Street, diagonally opposite the Anglican Church. The church was a small asbestos-walled austere building.

Sophie Elizabeth Andrews in Swaziland

My mother, Sophie, or Aunty Soph as we all called her, attended high school at William Hills High in Benoni, an educational institute of note. Children of colour commuted from across the eastern Witwatersrand to attend high school here. It catered predominantly for children of Coloured and Indian descent on the same grounds, though separated into Afrikaans and English classes. At the time the principal was Mr George Carr, held in high esteem for his academic achievements. Likewise, there were teachers who also travelled from Johannesburg and Pretoria as well as some locals who held sway in preparing the children for post-school jobs that were fitting for the socio-economic political milieu of the time. Names of illustrious teachers include Messrs Edgar Adolph, Lottie Behrens, Ben Jacobs, Collin Samuels, Singh, and Robert (Bob) Triegaardt, and Mrs Helen Foster (née Henry).

Aunty Soph obtained her JC. She was the first lady in the family to attain this prestigious accolade. But Sophie was ambitious and after the National Party came to power in 1948, just a few years after World War II, her prospects of earning enough to maintain a good standard of living were slim. She boarded a train and headed to Bremmersdorp, Swaziland. She had secured a teaching post at St Michaels School, an Anglican school with hostels for itinerant children. She was a live-in house mother

for the boarders attending the school. She confided that moving into this 'new' community was difficult. Although a free society under the protectorate status of Britain, the society was stratified differently. Breaking into the 'upwardly' mobile society of 'Coloured' or 'mixed' people was not without its social taboos. She did meet a partner and in 1950 my sister 'Brenda' Lucy was born. As she was a single mother, Aunty Soph sent Lucy to Grandma Marietjie, who raised her. She continued in her post and earned ever-increasing acceptance there. On 14 November 1953 I, Anthony Donald, was born at St Michaels in Bremmersdorp, which was renamed Manzini in 1960.

She shared with me how everyone at St Michaels was fond of me, even the Father remarking that I was destined for a great life. Of this, as is obvious, I was blissfully unaware. I was also taken to Modder East. Aunty Soph returned to Modder East, after having suffered a breakup of a biracial relationship that her parents did not approve of. And so, my brother Guy was born on 4 November 1955 at the Boksburg-Benoni Hospital. She found a job at Hugo Franco in Germiston as a garment worker, eking out a disappointing life as a single parent with no support. Walking around G-Town, as the CBD of Germiston was known, she met Michael 'Hiempie' Lentoor, who hailed from Queenstown and by her account was a dashing man. They got married in 1956, partly, I am convinced, also to bring relief to her dire economic situation. He became my surrogate father, and I called him Pappa for the rest of my life. He was not a stepfather, but a true father. It was hardly two years later when Hiempie left for Dukathole, the mixed township on the southern border of Germiston. This relationship was fraught with strife.

We moved to the Cape Section, Benoni, on my grandpa's property. Aunty Soph rented two large rooms. The first was a kitchen and dining room combined and the second served as a communal bedroom. For a time, we lived here, and my sister

My mother, Sophie Elizabeth Andrews (Andrews collection).

Hazel was born in 1958. My best memory from this time is when, on a Saturday when all the work was done, Aunty Soph would open the upright black piano and entertain us with "In the Mood" and other tunes played by ear. Some Saturdays were reserved for purgation; early in the morning we would be assembled and given what looked to me like a ladle full of castor oil and half an orange to camouflage the smell and taste. That was not the worst. We only had one outside loo, i.e., the old bucket system. By the time the castor oil kicked in, we lined up to use the loo, and clean ourselves with pre-cut newspaper, which was not very gentle after the fourth visit.

It was my chore to sweep the yard. I took pride in this job, making patterns to impress my mother.

I was also responsible for chopping wood, bringing in coal for the early morning fire and polishing the watering can on weekends. It was most rewarding when the Ellis de Luxe coal stove burned red in the morning, and we could sip on hot ground coffee called *boeretroos.*

While living in Third Street I had my first encounter with the hospital system. Guy at age two or three was playing next to the front double gate when the column collapsed on him. This was also my first encounter with severe bleeding. I was so moved to see my brother helpless and blood-stained. Aunty Soph summoned the help of my Uncle Tarzan and rushed Guy to Boksburg-Benoni Hospital (BBH), the only regional hospital at the time. They stayed away for hours and on their return, seeing my brother's head all wrapped in bandages, I burst into tears. He was returned to BBH a week later to remove the stitches, leaving a lifetime scar on his scalp but not his razor-sharp mind. As a teenager he learned to speak sentences backwards, just to impress his peers.

It was here in Third Street that my friend Toto van Ross and I played on the open stands chasing locusts in the tall kikuyu grass. Toto also had an uncle, Ben, who sold firewood off a horse- and-carriage. It was great fun to accompany him on his trip to buy bulk firewood and offcuts. He had great skill at handling the horse and I would sit spellbound watching him control the horse with the reins, two straps of leather directing the horse's every move. It was a huge animal to me back then, snorting as it galloped along the tarred roads in town and making a soft patter on soft soil. Back at his house we would fill bags with firewood and load them back onto the carriage, ready to take to the road to sell in the township. Oom Ben, as we called him, would click his tongue to get the horse started and a flick of the reins would get us on the way. An open horse- and- carriage and no safety features, but I was blissfully unaware; the adventure was too great! Sometimes Oom Ben would hand the reins to me, I would click my tongue to spur on the horse, and it gave me a tremendous sense of control and power over the horse- and -carriage.

In 1959, in my sixth year, my mother took me to Payneville in Springs to start schooling in Sub A at Payneville Coloured Primary School. I was taken to live with Uncle Barney and Aunty Rose. Their children Aletta (Poppie) and Lionel already attended the school, so Godfrey and I as contemporaries had to join them. This was a sad time for me. Uncle Barney's family was big, so I had to compete with other 'siblings' for everything. At night food plates were placed out on the table, the food dished up and after saying grace I would find my little piece of meat missing. I was miserable. My mother paid a visit midway through the year and witnessed my dire state. I went back with her to Third Street in Cape Section, Benoni. Grandpa James had moved his household to the city.

Third Street, Cape Section, Benoni

Separate communities living together

The Cape Section was the strip of land with Reading Street in the north and Fourth Street to the south, from Actonville in the east and where Hira Street is in the west. Between First and Third Streets Coloured people had freehold title; even though the homes were mostly wood- and- iron buildings, they legally owned them. This area had all the churches: Anglican and Baptist on Third Street and the Congregational Church (UCC) on Second Street. The Methodist Church held services in a classroom at William Hills High School.

The St Joseph Catholic Church was situated at the southern end of Third Street next to the traffic circle with a school that catered for Black pupils. The Benoni Coloured Primary School, adjacent to the Benoni Indian Primary School, as well as the only high school for Coloured and Indian children on the East Rand, William Hills High, was also on Third Street. There were retail shops serving this community: one owned by Harry, a Chinese, on

Third Street, and The Star shop owned by an Indian family with one of the movie houses, The Star Bioscope, also in the area. There was a Malay man on Third Street who owned the only tailor shop. We lived at 62 Third Street. This was my world, with a close-knit neighbourhood. Rev John Albertus Pop of the Baptist Church stayed in the manse next to the church, the Brink family to the east, the Van Ross family to the west and the Jeffreys and Idris Patel families, due south. I was friends with all the boys of my age in the street: Martin, Colin Jeffreys, Toto van Ross and Colin Brink, the boy who lived next to us. Further down the road lived Mary Moodley, an underground ANC activist whom I did not know but learnt about later.

At the beginning of 1960 I was enrolled at Benoni Coloured Primary School, Sub A, in the class of Miss Mary Collins. The principal was Mr Clarence September, who to me was an intimidating and unsmiling administrator.

Shopkeepers enticed return business by giving bonsella or *pasella* to their child clients. I preferred Harry's shop because he gave a handful of peanuts (salted, in the shell and roasted with skin) as *pasella* which I found healthy and tasty.

Me at age 7 (Andrews collection).

Rev Pop of the Free Baptist Church staged a Friday afternoon gathering for the children in the neighbourhood, called Bible Band. Everyone in attendance had an opportunity to recite their favourite Bible verse and at the end of the session we were rewarded with an orange, or another treat to ensure we come back for more. His wife, whom we just called Mrs Pop, was in attendance lending support, though both were of advanced age. I used to do chores for the Pop family: shop errands or collection of mail at the post office which was about five kilometres away. Again, I was so enthusiastic and carefree, walking the whole distance by myself

at only age seven. On my return Mrs Pop would hand me my wholesome and delicious sandwich as a reward. Middle of December that year Rev Pop arranged a Carols by Candlelight. Sheets of music were distributed and as a group we all walked singing from Cape Section to Actonville. It was fun and we attracted big crowds. Rev Pop placed me in charge of the money bag, my first taste of fiduciary responsibility. I felt so proud of the trust placed in me.

One day, late afternoon, my mother sent me to the shop. I went to the Star on Fourth Street. On my way back it was dark, and I had to walk through the lane to Third Street. I was accosted by two Black boys who wanted to take the change I had. I was so determined not to part with my mother's money that I closed my fist tightly and began screaming. I nearly squeezed the loaf of bread in two. The thugs gave up, but nobody came to my rescue. I was disgusted. My mother was proud of my feat.

Actonville

The original township of Actonville was mostly government housing with a few self-owned properties. Most were allocated to the soldiers returning from World War II, besides the bicycles and raincoats they were given that the old people talked about. But no vote! During the sixties a new sub-township, Katanga, was established. This area had a public tennis court as the only recreation area besides the open, naked soccer field hemmed in between the primary schools and William Hills High, which would double up as the sports field for the athletic season. There was also the Davey Social Centre, which was used as a cultural precinct where ballroom dancing was taught, and competitions held. It played a major role in cultural and fundraising events for the community.

It was during this time my Uncle Tarzan (Uncle T) got married to Aunty Doris and found a backyard double room on Second Street. I was not part of the negotiations but found myself seconded to Uncle T's household to perform chores and lend a hand with the new family. It was not long before this family secured a home in the newly established sub-township of Katanga in Actonville. I moved along with them and by this time Denise, his first daughter, was born. The houses in Katanga were semi-detached four-room dwellings with kitchen doors facing each other. So, in the morning when exiting through the kitchen, you had to greet your neighbour at five metres away looking straight into their kitchen. Our neighbour was the Plaatjies family, some distant cousin of the Andrews family, many times removed. Oom Plaai, as we called the father of the house, was unemployed and after school we used to play cards. He had two sons, James older than me and Leonard my contemporary.

Uncle T was an ardent gardener. His favourite flower was the snapdragon, which fascinated me as a child because we used to flip the tongue to expose the innards of the flowers. On one hot day Leonard and I, together with some local children, made our way to the local dam, Shady Willows. We were unable to swim but we scampered and frolicked all day long. When we returned home Aunty Doris was furious because she did not know where we were. She promptly informed Uncle T when he got home, who then gave me the hiding of my life. He kept on repeating his frustration in measured syllables. It was more out of sheer loss of control and my mother having abrogated a measure of 'responsibility' to him. I never went back to swim at Shady Willows. Much later I discovered that Uncle T could also not swim and had a fear of water.

Over Christmas Uncle T bought me my first suit of clothes. It was oversized because back then a child had to grow into his clothing, and it had to last. I was on duty as an altar boy at the Anglican Church in Third Street, an incense bearer. I was dressed and made my way, but along the way the oversized clothes retarded my pace. I arrived at church as the mass was ending, disappointed

but looking smart. After Christmas and New Year celebrations, Janu-worry arrived. Bonuses were finished and there were lots of weeks left to survive before the next payday. Aunty Doris gave me two jars with the ear for your finger, approximately 5 litres each, to sell at the bottle bag. Halfway through my trip, I was suddenly joined by a local chap from the community who 'offered to help' carry the bottles. I was relieved and he told me to go along and meet him at the bottle bag/exchange. I never saw him again. Explaining all this to Aunty Doris was difficult, choking back tears when I realised I was robbed. The return on one jar saw us through the month of Janu-worry. I learnt a tough lesson about trusting your fellow man…

On another occasion, I was on duty as an altar boy with Ralph Henry. For the early mass only two servers were required. All went well under the guidance of Ralph until communion was served. We knelt at the altar and the Father started administering the sacrament. When he came to me, I also pushed out my hand as a supplicant, since I saw how it was done. Father had a quick look towards Ralph, who nodded in the negative. Consequently, I received a blessing on my head but no wafer, for which you had to be confirmed. What the Father did not know was, after server practice sessions, we would help ourselves to wafers, just for the taste. At this stage I did not consider this as theft, rather preparation for the future. You had to be fourteen to receive your first holy communion and attend 'class' to prepare for acceptance into the church as a full member and participate in all the sacraments; , the sacrament of baptism was a prerequisite for full membership.

When Aunty Soph and Hiempie got married we transferred to the Methodist Church, led by a fire and brimstone lay preacher, Mr Cecil Sauls. He would get so worked up with his voice reaching a crescendo that he almost became breathless. This passion remained until his death as my patient from a severe stroke. My memory about the

The Andrews siblings: Brenda (Lucy), me (Tony), Guy, Kenneth and Lorna (Andrews collection).

church services at the William Hills School was the Christmas party. I received my present, a green second-hand metal Chevrolet car. It was mine and soon after the festivities I dismantled the car to find out how it was put together, not realising there is an African saying: "He who upsets a thing must know how to put it back together again", a lesson for later in my life.

Indian Section, co-existence

Early the next year I moved back to Third Street, but not for long. My youngest aunt, Martha (Kolletjie shortened to Kol), got married to Bonnie van Staade and they moved to Third Street, Indian Section.
By this time, I was in the Sub A class of Miss Mary Collins. I later learned she was the daughter of Mr JJ Collins, the principal of Stirtonville Primary School. I was doing Sub B when I was told that Aunty Kol needed a child to help with chores in setting up their home and so I joined her home, a one-room dwelling with curtains to demarcate sleeping from living quarters but leading out to a generous stoep that abutted on the street perimeter, with the roof of the stoep held up by beautiful columns and a low wall. This was a complex communal arrangement. Bonnie's mother, Nene, was married to a Muslim man, Mr Mohammed, and had three rooms, while Bonnie's aunt Meisie rented two rooms and the rest formed a quad as the communal area. One Saturday

morning Mr Mohammed prayerfully slaughtered a chicken. He lost control and, to our delight, we saw this headless chicken running around the quad until it dropped dead. The dead chicken was dunked into hot water for a while and the feathers plucked before a fragrant chicken curry would emerge from the morning's efforts. The slaughtering process is still buried in the deep recesses of my mind.

I slept under the table on the floor. One night I woke up and must have been delirious because I saw images on the wall. I shouted Kol's name three times, but getting no response, I jumped up and leaped behind Kol's back. After the turmoil subsided, I made it through the night but the next day when the story spread in the yard, Ma-Nene brought Lennon's 'duiwelsdrek en doepa', which was burnt to relieve me of bad spirits. I slept well after this incident.

As the name implied, the Indian section was occupied by people of Indian descent. Though they were in the majority in this section, the population was diverse because they rented property to anyone who could afford the rent. The main street separating the Indian section from the Black section housed all the Indian shops dependent on passing foot traffic for trade. It was a very busy place with higher volumes of traffic on Saturdays when most weekly salaried people did their shopping. On Fourteenth Street there was a bioscope called The Lyric, quite a posh venue with a large fish tank in the foyer to create interest and show off good taste. This was the venue for serious movie lovers who could afford the slightly higher entrance fee, compared to that of The Star bioscope.

Bonnie was and still is an ardent jazz music lover and on weekends his friends, from across the 'Black' groups, would congregate and they would listen to jazz, while downing copious amounts of beer. There was also lively dancing and robust discussion of how their football club, Blackburn Rovers, performed earlier in the day. These parties went on into the wee hours of the night. Bonnie had a cabinet full of jazz LPs, long-play vinyl records, and a ghetto blaster to fuel the mood. I saw friendships started during this time that survived separation enforced by the Group Areas Act.

A lasting memory of this time was Ebrahim (shortened to Bruimpie), Bonnie's half-brother, who owned pigeons. He and I would go into the cages to change the water and clean it. On weekends we sat on the back stoep watching the fantails and the tumblers soar into the sky and tumble down but just in time corrected themselves not to hit the ground. Up to this stage I did not own animals. To see Bruimpie so involved with the pigeons, the feeds and eggs, caring for newly hatched pigeons, was mesmerising. It showed great love.

I completed my Std 1 with Mr Balance, a very dark-skinned man from Springs, quiet and very methodical. Thereafter I moved on to Std 2 with Mr Peter Magerman, a man who was the complete opposite. He was aggressive, of small stature and yellow-skinned and had thick straight hair combed backward. He had an unguarded tongue and would scold us at the drop of a hat. We chalked it up to his privilege. His father owned Pixie Dry Cleaners and the Pixie Soccer Club. So, they were well-off and he unbridled. He would curl his tongue, bite hard and give us lashes for not doing homework.

As young boys we collected bones and bottles to sell at the local bottle bag/exchange. The favourite spot was to walk to the beer hall area where adults converged to drink traditional beer and eat lots of meat, casting the bones aside. It would be a fruitful place for us, filling our tins in no time. A clever 'entrepreneur' would come round with his horse-and- carriage and we would sell our bottles and bones to him. It was a fair exchange. The money earned would be spent on going to the movies, to watch *Samson and Delilah* or Yul Brynner's war movies including *Taras Bulba*.

At the end of that year, Aunty Kol approached me and said the family was moving to Stirtonville in Boksburg. I did not know where this was but

accepted it. On the weekend of the move, the removal truck stopped at the Municipal Offices in Stirtonville, where Bonnie arranged the permits to enter and live in Stirtonville as we were classified as Coloured. So, we moved into the back quarters of 'The Big House' on Ramashala Street.

Stirtonville, Boksburg

We – Bonnie and his family including Beulah, their first baby – were among the first to move to Stirtonville from Benoni. The motivation to pre-empt the Group Areas Act was never shared with me, perhaps acceptance of the inevitable. I later learnt that a political storm raged in Actonville opposing the move of the Coloured community to Boksburg. People had legitimate right of ownership, most invested in freehold properties shunning the ninety-nine-year lease option. Uprooting this established community of well over twenty years was painful. Prominent in the political debate was Messrs Bob Triegaardt and Clarence September, but their futile efforts resulted in an embittered community moving against its will to a new township. The 'law' had spoken.

So, in 1964 we got established in Stirtonville in two rooms in the backyard of The Big House on Ramashala Street. I was enrolled for Std 3 at Boksburg Coloured School, which was outside the perimeter fence of the township, as was the local clinic, soccer stadium and the house of the superintendent, Mr Stirton. Kol was a housewife and expecting her second child, Clifford. Bonnie was working at Panelyte, a woodworking company in Boksburg North, making kitchen furniture. He was a good woodworker, but the pay was low, so the shorter commute helped save funds desperately needed to care for his growing family.

Social values were heavily influenced by Americans, with many people of colour aspiring to live like the Americans: Florsheims, Jarmans and Barker shoes, Dobbs for hats and button collared shirts and Chevrolets for cars. With low earnings, living up to the American lifestyle was a huge sacrifice just to fit in with the peers. Even American jazz was the music of choice, as people listened to crooners like Nat King Cole and Duke Ellington, the musical orchestral maestro. Money was scarce but the lifestyle continued. Bonnie loved frying kippers for breakfast on Saturdays, leaving a thick lingering smell in the air; children were not invited.

When we moved to Stirtonville, the Black community had not yet moved to their newly established township, Vosloorus. With the other Coloured families originally living in Stirtonville, life carried on as if the emerging political changes were still far off.

I settled in at Boksburg Coloured Primary School with Mr Chequenton as my teacher. It turned out that this was the oldest school in Boksburg, later renamed Goede Hoop Primary. The school complex was comprised of two rows of classes: the western half of four buildings included the principal's office and the lower grades and standards. The second row accommodated the Std 4 and 5 classes. Previously this was where formal education stopped for Coloured people in Stirtonville. For further education they had to commute to William Hills High in Benoni. Few did. The primary school was next to the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church which had school buildings that housed a primary school for Black children.

Next to the church was the municipal complex that had some shops. and the local beer hall that was very busy. We ran to the shops during school breaks to buy a slice of brown bread with a healthy dollop of peanut butter, spread so thickly that it got stuck on your palate. It was delicious on a hungry stomach at just two cents a pop. I made friends with the kids who all represented local Stirtonville Coloured families, quite a sizeable community. My best friend became Macalfred Johaar or Maccie as we all called him. We were classmates all through primary school. Mrs Johaar, Aunty Marina, was of Indian descent, with two beautiful daughters. The

older one, Singhy, had almond eyes and Ollie, the younger one, had a crop of blonde hair and a very pleasant demeanour. We all belonged to the local Methodist Church, and I would eye Ollie from afar.

On an occasion Aunty Kol sent me to the corner shop, where there were a few youngsters lingering on the shop veranda. On exiting the shop these fellows started taunting me and I ran, scared as hell. As I ran, I could hear the stones whizzing past me. I was under attack. At the time I could not fathom why they would attack me. I suppose we were living in fast-changing political times. But this was not the only occasion. I befriended Petros, a boy of my age at the Big House. He and I built wire cars and articulated trucks with steering mechanisms. One afternoon while we were playing on the pavement, my feet were pulled from under me. I fell forward but fortunately could break my fall and not hurt my face. The perpetrator ran off without me seeing his face, which was perhaps just as well. What would I have done?

When I was in Std 4, 1965, the Black residents started moving to Vosloorus and all over the township there were empty residential buildings. We had a new teacher, Mr Dudley Adolph, a smart, well-dressed gentleman who commuted from Payneville, Springs. He had a duck-like walk, which resulted in his nickname, Ducks. By this time the Black school on the grounds of St Francis of Assisi Church had emptied out. The newly appointed Catholic minister, Father Stan Brennan, had just arrived from Ireland and started converting the empty buildings for alternate use. A new library was established and named the St Anthony's Centre. I went there to receive my first formal art training, sneaking into the library to look at all the books; the books on science and biology interested me most.

It was during this time that my mother and the rest of her family moved into 62 Mpendu Street, one of the vacated residential properties. I moved back to live with them and for once we were all living together under one roof. We lived one block away from the Municipal Clinic. On Monday afternoons we would rush across to the clinic to help unload the fresh produce, which was earmarked as supplementary feeding for people suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis (TB). This was an example of early community relief work. For our effort we would be rewarded with a bunch of carrots or an apple per person.

An interesting observation was that the clinic, Boksburg Coloured Primary School, the Superintendent's house, and the Indian Primary School were all outside the perimeter fence of Stirtonville as a 'Native Township', part of the measures to control the movement of goods and persons. It is said that Nelson Mandela thwarted this measure when he was campaigning for the ANC in the area during the Defiance Campaign. Ironically, some of the street names referred to White Councillors: Baker, Stanbury Circle, etc. What a contradiction!

By 1966 I commenced Std 5 with Mr James Busby as my class teacher. He had a reputation for being vicious. I excelled and stayed clear of his bad temper, which was mostly due to alcohol abuse. In winter, the principal, Mr Collins, recruited some of us to collect cow dung to stoke the stoves for some warmth. We stayed away all day, collecting a measly number of dung cakes. The next morning Mr Collins walked into our classroom swinging the *rottang*, the cane. My heart sank. All the learners who had defaulted collecting cow dung were summarily called to the front, tried, and found guilty. Mr Collins gave each boy six of the best. To date I have never felt so aggrieved: for all our effort we still had to endure the wrath of the principal and ended up with a stinging butt. I don't think I ever forgave him.

The municipality commenced demolishing the wood- and- iron structures that were still vacant after the Black residents had moved. We, the young boys, mounted the tractors that we used to call *ganda-gandas.* They were driven by Black

drivers. We stood on the tractors like generals supervising the demolition of houses, unaware of the political intrigue and implications. For us it was fun, enjoying the noise of the tractors and crashing buildings, not interested in the dust it kicked up. And soon it was over, and the area fell silent for decades, the planning and redevelopment to follow. Eventually some of the land would be used for a new high school.

Pappa had a sister who moved into the same block as us. Her husband, Mr J van Niekerk, oom Manie to all of us, was an old man already, a World War II veteran. He had retired as a miner but was an active lay preacher in the Methodist Church, the fire and brimstone type. In his sermons he would take you from Tobruk in North Africa to the Alpha and Omega in a single breath. Their youngest son, Joseph, and I were contemporaries and attended Sunday School together. We also attended the Wesleyan Guild sessions held on Tuesdays and supervised by Mr Andy Solomons.

The Solomons family was very active in the Methodist Church management. The old man was instrumental in moving the church from a small, tiny wood- and- iron building to a much bigger building on Church Street, with a manse attached to the complex. Their daughter Doreen was my Sunday School teacher. Their son Vivian was only a few years older than me and was the first 'Black' continuity announcer on the highly segregated SABC.

The mass resettlement of the Coloured community was in full swing. People moved from Actonville in Benoni, Dukathole in Germiston and some from Edenvale and Alexandra Township. There was a scramble and manipulation for housing. Besides the area called Reiger Park where people could afford to buy freehold stands and build their own homes, the majority had to opt for council housing in the different subsections of Stirtonville. The Galeview houses were concrete semi-detached four-room units without ceilings and had steel doors and a waterborne outside toilet, so you could say the toilets were also semi-detached. The area called Jerusalem had well-constructed brick-and-mortar units with two or three bedrooms. Scattered throughout were grey two-room units with a stoep on a very small plot, approximately 240 sqm. The Doubles had three-room houses with a veranda that was soon boarded up to create a fourth room. The densest area was called the Singles, consisting of a building with four independent rooms, each with a separate door. These units had communal toilets at various points. The poorest of the poor were housed in these units.

Socially, the sudden thrusting together of people from such diverse backgrounds created social tensions that spilt over into gang turf wars. Much of the gangsterism was also drug related. It lasted for a long time, consuming what meagre resources the community had to build on. The pre-existing social fabric that had been created in the communities where people originally came from was shattered and new social structures had to be built and nurtured. A high degree of mistrust contributed to a prolonged period of social integration. Social stratification soon took hold. Residents from the area called Reiger Park were seen as the elite, living posh in their bonded houses while the rest eked out a living in the rented council accommodation. This created a strange dependency on the council to fix and upgrade the housing stock, provide repair services for water, electricity, and plumbing, and do repair work to the structures. The township soon developed a housing backlog and the government resorted to building houses by infilling. The first of these schemes was called 'Little Germiston' because it mostly housed people from Germiston. Later a new area was built so fast that people called it 'Fast Move'. The Singles were demolished, and residents resettled progressively, as their income permitted, into 'better' accommodation.

The previously Indian primary school was renamed Drommedaris Primary and a new primary

school, Reiger Park Primary, was built. Very quickly three primary schools were up and running. Reiger Park quickly became the prestigious primary school because of its newness and location in the 'posh' area. Mr Clarence September was the first principal at this school. Mr JJ Collins remained at Stirtonville, renamed Goede Hoop, and Mr Arthur Hare from Coronationville was the principal at Drommedaris Primary School.

At the end of 1966, I was the best student and won a voucher from Sales House, a retail store in town with a predominantly Black clientele and which also sold school uniforms to Black students. The following week I raced to Sales House on foot, past the neat commercial White high school, then not concerned that I was not allowed in. I bought my first pair of jeans that had two back pockets and a tickey pocket, and with the change two white handkerchiefs. That Saturday my friend Stephen Eustace and I went to the bioscope, The Lyric, in Benoni. We were both about twelve years old, venturing on our own by train to Benoni. After enjoying the movie, we headed back to Dunswart train station. On arrival, we realised that there was a derby match between Pirates and Moroka Swallows at the Wattville stadium and the crowds were also heading for Dunswart station. There was a relatively small section of the railway platform reserved for the Black commuters. The White section was empty and fiercely defended by Black Railway Police. We made it onto the platform and when the westbound train arrived, we were bodily carried along by the crowd. When the train started moving and I had settled down among the throng, I discovered that both my handkerchiefs had been stolen. I was deeply shocked, fed up and disappointed in humanity. My hard-earned reward, just stolen…

Christmas that year was also a low-key event. Increasingly, the community established churches and gradually used it as part of the rebuilding of society. Most churches were initially housed in wood- and- iron buildings. The United Congregational Church was the first brick- and-mortar church to be built. It was a huge project, two storeys high and with sloping auditorium-style seating. It was an impressive structure. I remember visiting the building site to observe the activity and witness the construction of such a magnificent building. It sparked my interest in architecture. A possible reason for the quick development of this church building was that the elite were congregants there and many had contributed handsomely.

At the beginning of 1967 I enrolled at Oosrand High School. It was newly established in a disused previously Black school that had not been renovated at all. It was a stark building: no ceilings, bare walls with missing windowpanes and without heating. The school had two sections: a big quad with classrooms facing onto the centre and a back section that had a row of three classrooms, a domestic education building and a woodwork section. The bare biology lab fitted between the two centres. Behind the classrooms were the toilets for girls and to the west was a row of toilets for the boys. The entire school was next to an active mine dump, separated only by a strip of trees.

The first principal was Mr Manwell Felix, an English-speaking teacher previously from William Hills High School in Actonville, Benoni. The first batch of students arrived from the three feeder primary schools, all named after the three ships of Jan van Riebeeck: De Goede Hoop, De Dromedaris and De Reijger. Chaos reigned on day one. After calm was restored, we were marched off to our register classes. There were six Std 6 classes. I was herded to Mr Titus' class, Std 6A. The Std 6 teachers were: Mr David Wathen (Afrikaans), Mr Eugene Jones (English), Mr Peter de Villiers (Mathematics), Mr P Titus (Geography), Mr Martin du Preez (History), Mr Simon S Wangra (Biology) and Mr A Clements (Woodwork).

It was our first exposure to changing of classes, organised chaos when the bell rang. Initially the number of subjects were overwhelming, but we

soon got the hang of things. Fifty percent of our teachers came from other Coloured townships: Payneville in Springs, Eersterust in Pretoria, Dukathole in Germiston and one from Coronation in Johannesburg. The Std 7 classes dwindled to four classes and Std 8 to two classes. Std 9 was only one class. There was no Std 10 (matric) class in 1967. We pressed on through the first winter with no heating and in August we contended with the dust storms, especially from the mine dump next to the school. I took to most academic subjects like a duck to water but had difficulty with woodwork as a practical subject. I was at a loss purely because of no previous exposure and poor teaching, which I regret. Our history teacher was excellent and established a sound basis for historical development and created the rudiments of a political awareness.

I found myself a paying job at the shop of Nanabhay after school, sweeping the floors and dusting the items on the shelves. A deliberate hole in a flour bag was not reported and after a week I was fired. Dealing with issues promptly is a great lesson I learnt that I certainly did not anticipate nor was prepared for. It stayed with me for life. I was not upset, and soon found another job, selling the newspaper *The World* to adults returning from work. Trade was not brisk. Later I switched to *The Post*, but this did not make a huge difference in sales numbers. I could not figure this out: was it because of poverty, low literacy or perhaps lack of interest? Irrespective, I returned quite a few copies unsold. My sales spot was on Rotary Street, the first stop for incoming buses. It was also the spot where we played.

A classmate at the time was Raymond Buckley, a difficult character. He was extremely argumentative and wanted to dominate everything. It so happened that one afternoon we argued and got into a brawl. The wrestling match did not last long. I don't think Raymond expected that I would fight back. I turned him onto his head and the two of us got up, dishevelled. Raymond was worse off; he squeaked and ran home, which was just up the street. We never crossed paths again, even in adulthood. Raymond had a stint as a gangster, but even that was short-lived.

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Trapped in the group area

Socio-economic development

The Group Areas Act disrupted the lives of the people that were resettled. Most people from Third Street in the Cape Section of Benoni and Actonville were homeowners. With the forced removals they had to sell their homes at undervalued prices. Some of them could buy freehold land in the new Reiger Park, but still had to raise bonds to finance their new homes. Some were business people, mostly taxi owners. Professional teachers could raise subsidy financing through the education department, but only if they were male. Those that owned domestic livestock had to sell up. Oom Ben had to sell his horse- and- carriage. The majority rent government housing stock, paying rent for more than forty years, which contributed to the impoverishment of the community.

The job reservation system allowed Coloured people in the Transvaal to be trained in some trades: bricklaying, carpentry or polishing, but most worked as operator welders for slightly higher wages than Black workers. Income was just sufficient to pay for rent and living essentials and very little was left to accumulate wealth. So, most people of colour resorted to innovative schemes to augment their income, like playing fafi, a Chinese game of chance, or stokvels, or *oorgooi*. Most weeks or months they juggled paying first Peter this week then Paul the next, or skipping the rent payment: the essence of township budgeting and financial juggling, which can't really be called budgeting. Most workers received weekly pay, so on Friday evenings, with some cash to their disposal, were able to indulge in a chop or fish and chips. On Sundays, though, most had a sit-down balanced lunch while weekday meals were canned vegetables and fish. If spare funds could be found, it was spent on minced meat because it was cheap and could spread further. It was only at the end of the year when bonuses were received and the stokvels paid out that people indulged in expensive Christmas meals and extra clothing, and school clothes for the children. The rest of the year it was belt tightening

to make ends meet.

The average level of education was about Std 6 and as a result highly skilled and high-paying jobs were out of reach. Most men were drawn to semi-skilled jobs in the steel industries on the East Rand in companies like Dorman Long. Later, with the emergence of electronic firms, they were taken up in companies like Standard Telephones and Cables (STC) and Telephone Manufacturers of South Africa (TMSA) to work as relay assemblers. Workers were teetering just above the poverty datum line. Social inequality was stark, and the economic divide was growing relentlessly. The time spent commuting to and from work was about two hours and with spending eight hours at work there was little time for cultural activities. For some, Friday to Saturday was spent indulging in alcohol, a few in binge drinking. Yet some of these revellers spent Sunday at church, followed by a *dop* just to prevent a hangover on Monday, a big lunch and postprandial snooze on Sunday afternoons.

Mr Swartz, a teacher, took the Sunday School children on a trip to Cape Town. At great sacrifice on the part of the family, I was given the opportunity to go along. It was my first long distance travel by train and the excitement was palpable. The two-day journey was exciting; the daytime travel with the passing scenery was new and fresh. At night we slept on the bunks and washed our faces in the washbasin in the compartment; every experience was new. We reached Cape Town early on the second morning, just in time to see the sun rays breaking through the clouds. It was a fantastic reception. We changed trains at Cape Town Station and boarded a local train bound for Simon's Town. This was a scenic route all along the coast. We opened the window and hung our heads out the window to feel the wind on our faces. It was a refreshing experience. Arriving at Simon's Town, we alighted and headed to our accommodation for the week.

Accommodation at the Methodist Church camp site was basic: decommissioned double decker buses refurbished with beds. Our excitement was not dampened. After breakfast of bacon and eggs we set off on our first hike. The route was not strenuous, and we enjoyed the daily hikes. Before supper we held a short service and then we tucked into the evening meal. I can't remember any more of those meals; they did not make an impression on me. We were taken on a trip into Cape Town city and District Six, which I found chaotic. Flower sellers were shouting at the top of their voices and in District Six the streets were narrow with lots of human traffic. The narrow streets were also steep to negotiate. I was relieved to be back at our campsite. The week sped by quickly and we headed back to the old Transvaal on the Trans-Karoo train. We arrived back home and as the saying goes: travel broadens the mind.

In January 1968 I commenced Standard 7 at Oosrand High School. In history we learnt about the French Revolution. The Reiger Park community also woke up to the political realities. It was claimed that the Management Committee set up by the Boksburg Municipality, did not deliver on the political expectations. An opposition Labour Party was established and began to upset the 'subservience' of the Management Committee; meetings were poorly attended. The liberation movements were banned. The African National Congress, after the Defiance Campaign and the Rivonia Trial, was not spoken about in public. People feared arbitrary arrest and being jailed under the Suppression of Communism Act, with the possibility of an initial 90-day detention and subsequent 180-day detention without trial.

The discontent was palpable, but leaders like Mr Sonny Leon addressed political meetings in private homes to small groups of discontented members. Infiltration by the Special Branch was rampant and *impimpis* were sent to report back on political activity. Slogans like 'No taxation without

representation' were quietly uttered in protest, but because of poor organisational ability no progress was made. In the meantime, social conditions deteriorated. The population exploded and backyard squatting became increasingly severe. The delivery of housing rental stock did not keep pace with the population growth and the allocation of houses was used as a political tool to quell political dissent.

The people, trapped in the Group Area, unable to set priorities and without capital, saw how undeveloped land in the control of the council lay fallow, yet the population was bursting at the seams. The community had become despondent with increasing impoverishment and high population density bringing about new social tensions beyond their control. They were trapped in what was described as dormitory townships where all they could do was to sell their labour and not participate in the mainline economic activities. There was a legal restraint in forming companies or buying shares in companies; collective business opportunities were limited to twenty partners but even then, came under severe competitive pressure.

By 1967, when I was in Standard 6, the government's separate Coloured Affairs Department had introduced external exams for schools to control content and the number of passes. This was followed by the establishment of separate tertiary institutions, universities, and colleges, for the different racial groups: for Coloured people it was the University of the Western Cape, the University of Zululand (Ngoye) for Zulu people and the University of the North (Turfloop) for the Sotho-speaking groups. The oldest Black University at Alice (Fort Hare) was reserved for Xhosa speakers even though this institution previously produced Black academically trained persons from the whole of southern Africa, people like Nelson Mandela and Robert Mugabe.

Higher education was limited. To attend an 'open' university one had to obtain ministerial consent, which was granted very sparingly. Consequently, professional development was limited to teaching, religious ministry and nursing at the whim and the demands of the government. The first Black person to obtain a degree was Pixley ka Isaka Seme, who graduated from Mount Hermon School in 1902 and then from Columbia University, New York in 1906. He later became president of the ANC.

I passed Standard 7 under these stringent socio-political conditions. My Afrikaans teacher, Mr Neville Moses, was also our class teacher. He was a rather eccentric character. One day he arrived with his DKW vehicle and showed it to us. He allowed me into the driver's seat and to start up, but I could not master the clutch, so the vehicle stalled. I did not have a driver's licence, so I did not feel bad. At the end of the year, I passed the external exams set by the Coloured Affairs Department. As a pioneer it made me feel good.

After the examinations, Joseph van Niekerk, who was streetwise, and I were sent on an errand to town. We caught the local bus but stood at the door of the bus, like the clever boys always did. At the corner of Rotary Street and what would become Gerry Oberholzer Street, the bus turned, and I was flung out. I landed on my back and the bus came to a stop with the left front wheel coming to rest on my left palm. I screamed and the bus edged forward, and I jumped up. Serendipitously all this occurred opposite the surgery of Dr Y Ebrahim. I was rushed into the surgery, but the itinerant general practitioner was on lunch. The nurse took charge. She bandaged my hand, phoned for an ambulance which arrived in no time, and I was bundled into it. With sirens whining I was rushed to Boksburg Benoni Hospital (BBH), to the Black casualty ward which was at the back of the property. I had lost a lot of blood, fainted and everything became a blur. All the doctors were White. I came to with an intravenous drip running in my right forearm and in front of the X-ray department waiting to be X-rayed. It turned out that no bones were broken

but my left hand had a degloving injury of the dorsum. I was wheeled to the surgery ward and prepared for theatre. I had to wait until my mother arrived to sign consent for the procedure. I came to again later in the holding area of the theatre. The surgeon, Dr Edel Morris, came to introduce himself and comfort me. What has remained with me from this experience were the frequent visits by Edel Morris to check on my condition. It felt so reassuring.

I must have fallen asleep or been drugged from the pre-anaesthetic because the next thing I recall is waking up the next morning with my left forearm strapped tightly against my body. I was not in pain but felt a constant weariness, so I soon fell asleep again. I woke at three o'clock that afternoon to find what looked to me like the whole school standing around my bed. The concern was much appreciated but I felt embarrassed for causing so much commotion! They all left while I had fallen back into a slumber. The next day Dr Morris arrived for a wound check-up. I then discovered my hand was stitched into a pouch (full thickness skin graft) with skin graft donor sites on both thighs, the only painful sites. Dr Morris was happy, and my wounds were dressed again as I settled into recuperation. I looked up and a blood transfusion was still going; to my amazement I read that the donor was a White person. That was extremely confusing, and something over which I had no control. It was a done deed, a White person's blood coursing through my veins and saving my life…

In mid-December 1967 my sister Brenda and Pat Nappie got married and that afternoon they paid me a visit in hospital with the entire entourage. For the second time I caused quite a stir in the ward, though this time it was a bit more pleasant. I felt ambivalent, lying in hospital and having a negative influence on the wedding. I spent the rest of December in hospital, even celebrating Christmas there, with the only good thing the lovely roast beef that was served for lunch. It did not compensate for not being home for Christmas. Early in January, Mrs Solomons brought the newly appointed probationary minister, Pastor Harold Brooks, to meet me. He was such an ecclesiastical figure. We took an immediate liking to each other. A lifelong relationship ensued.

I was taken back to theatre after five weeks for the release procedure. In mid-January 1968 I was discharged. My bundle of torn and bloodstained clothes was brought to me, a reminder of that fateful day that changed my life forever. My family had moved to 120A Lupin Street in Galeview, and my return home created a new stir, with all the neighbours popping in to be reassured that I had survived. The old lady next to us, aunty Saai Odendaal, came to change my dressings. I felt like an object, but submitted to the outpouring of love and concern.

My next challenge was returning to school to commence Standard 7. Rumours had reached me that Mr Felix had retired, and we now had a new principal, Mr Diedericks. He was a forceful person and had decreed that all boys should wear short pants to school. I arrived back with the school in full swing and went straight to the principal's office. I declared my position and requested to be exempted from wearing a short pants. It was granted, to my delight and relief because my thighs were still in bandages. I quickly took to the academic work. My attendance, though, was interrupted by monthly follow-up visits to the hospital for check-ups and rehabilitation. I made a full recovery except for an obvious puffy, full thickness graft on the dorsum of my hand that made me very self-conscious. I began hiding my hand by putting it in my pocket. My ego was dented. My self-image was somewhat restored after I enquired from one of the doctors if I could continue with karate. He confirmed I could. At age fifteen it was hard on my self-image and then God decided to put pimples on my face.

That year, Oosrand High School sent their first lot of matriculants to the University of the Western

Cape (UWC): Andrew (Nieto) le Roux, Cravin Collis, and Johnny Issel. The latter had returned to school as an adult to obtain a matric pass.

The following year, after having fully recovered, I was back at church and started teaching Sunday School. With the help of my friend Daniel Prince, who lived on the same street, I regained my confidence and, with encouragement from Rev Brooks, eventually became superintendent of the Sunday School and therefore had to attend the church quarterly meeting. It was a good learning experience.

In December I joined the South African Railways and Harbours to work in the scullery on long distance trains on a part-time basis. My first trip to Mafikeng was a light introduction to work on the railways. The next morning, with a full passenger load, we set off for Johannesburg. I started off peeling vegetables all morning. After lunch I had my hands in the washing-up sink for mile upon mile, the real working environment. We arrived back in Johannesburg early evening, and I took a train back to the East Rand, to go home for some rest. Two days later, on my way to Durban, by sheer luck, I slept in the staff quarters on board the train. We set off for Johannesburg mid-morning the next day. It was hectic. I was peeling veggies, whisking cream, and washing pots and pans. That night after I finished my shift, I walked through the dining car reserved for White passengers. The ticket officer, sitting at his table, was as drunk as a lord. He tried to get my attention, but I ignored him. After disembarking the next day, I was told to collect my pay and that I need not come back.

The next week I walked into a job at a company called Spicers. I was employed to supervise the working of an envelope cutting machine. After a brief orientation I was in charge of this behemoth of a machine that cut windows into the envelopes, making a monotonous clicking sound with a regular cadence that could put you to sleep. By the end of the week, I had mastered what was expected of me, so I relaxed. I completed a month-long stint with lots of pay that I shared with my mother.

By the middle of January 1970, I entered what was the first year, i.e., Standard 9, of a two-year matric. Academically this was a year of transition in preparation for the final matric year. I settled on an academic path with subjects such as Afrikaans (HG), English Second Language (HG), Mathematics (HG), Accountancy (HG), History and Biology (HG). The school did not offer physical science. Biology was mostly taught from textbooks with very little laboratory work, and there was no equipped laboratory.

I met Mr Sherwill Sampson who was running a youth club. We played a lot of table tennis and some chess. We debated among ourselves and attended what was called dance sessions. Midway through the year Mr Sampson, who owned 8 mm and 16 mm projectors, started screening movies in the hall where we had our meetings. He taught me to operate the 16 mm projector and in no time I became the projectionist for the Saturday movies. It was my job on a Friday to travel to Johannesburg to fetch the reels of the movies to be shown that Saturday. Mr Sampson would give me bus and train fare for travelling. I walked to the train station to save the bus fare and lay-byed clothing for me in Johannesburg. At the time the building of the Carlton Centre was in progress. I would stop by on the viewing platform to witness this building rise out of the bowels of the earth to reach fifty storeys. I was fascinated. The architect in me was inspired.

On Saturday afternoons we set up the hall, which entailed blocking out windows, and I set up the projector in anticipation of our crowds, who did not disappoint. For fifteen cents you gained entry and sat on makeshift seating or on the floor. Crowds were particularly plentiful when we showed Hollywood classics like *Gone with the Wind*. There was trouble when the cellulite in the film reel snapped and interrupted the movie, to the sound of whistling and expletives from the audience. I had to

splice and get the movie going as soon as possible; they were paying patrons, after all.

The year 1971 was my matric year. I was appointed as the head boy. We were a class of twenty-eight pupils, compared to the six classes that started off in Standard 6, a major attrition rate that did not even raise an eyebrow. I was the first in my family to reach matric and much was expected of me. I teamed up with my friend Stephen Eustace. We had the same subjects, working hard to obtain university passes. We even arranged to sleep over at the school to get extra lessons. For mathematics support we went to the home of Mr Charles Billings. He would augment our lessons and took the opportunity to teach us about the vicissitudes of life. His sacrifice was much appreciated. I would even pay him and his recent bride visits over weekends, watching him and his cousin tinkering on a Peugeot 404, a dirty, greasy affair.

Halfway through the year my parents had a huge fight – the umpteenth one – and, escaping with her life, my mother decided to divorce Hiempie. Previously when they had fought Aunty Soph would retort: "You are so uncouth." This would baffle Hiempie, and the fight would end. He did not know the meaning of the word. On this occasion the fight was almost deadly, and she was determined to bring an end to the relationship. I was taken in by my Aunt Grace and Uncle Harry Tekana. Their house had electricity which made studying easier, although I had a longer walk to school. On one occasion I was given a lift by my teacher, Mr Martin du Preez. After getting in, he asked me if I thought I would pass my matric. I gave him a short answer: "It is not if but how, sir." We travelled in silence for the rest of the trip.

Throughout my school days I was promised a bicycle if I passed the exams at the end of the year. If all those promises had been kept, I would have been able to open a bicycle shop. The other promise from my Uncle Cyprian during my high school days was that he would arrange for me to attend the St Barnabas private school in Bosmont. This also did not materialise.

In June I was introduced to Dr Lionel Cutting, a Coloured medical doctor who had started a medical practice in Reiger Park. He was from Kimberley and had studied at the University of Cape Town (UCT). I was in awe and clumsily spoke about myself, that I was in matric with the intention of studying medicine. The only question he asked was if I was good at mathematics, to which I responded in the affirmative. He was boarding with a well-known family, Mr G Botha, who had recruited him. The discussion was short-lived, and I carried on with my life.

By August we had to apply for admission to university. I had changed my mind from architecture to medicine. There was no way I was going to design four-room council houses for the impoverished Black community. To attend an open university, I had to apply for ministerial consent, which I duly did. I am still waiting for a response. I passed matric with exemption.

At the end of the year, I got a job at a bookshop in Braamfontein, De Jongh's Bookstore, as a despatch clerk. It was a great job. I was surrounded by academic books because the store supplied Wits University across the road, which provided a foretaste of academia. Getting to work entailed a long train ride, so I got a physical science textbook and started reading in preparation for first year.

One morning Mr De Jongh walked up to me, handed me his banking bag, and asked me to deposit the money at the Volkskas Bank. I dutifully walked to the Volkskas Bank, entered by the main door and joined the queue. Heads were turning frantically, until one of the bank clerks walked up to me asking me to use the 'other' door. I objected, telling her that this was not my money but that it belonged to the owner of the bookstore. She did not relent, and I was ushered to the 'Black' entrance. I completed the deposit and promptly reported the incident to Mr De Jongh. He did not respond.

At the end of January 1972, on my return from work, I found a letter pressed between the gate and the gate post addressed to me. It was my matric results, and I had passed with matriculation exemption. I was on cloud nine, ecstatic beyond words. I worked for nearly three months and saved enough to pay for my train fare to Cape Town as well as my registration fee. I could even buy new clothing for university.. While my dream was to become a doctor, I had resorted to plan B, doing the big four first-year subjects at UWC: Botany, Zoology, Chemistry and Physics.

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Into the unknown

University of the Western Cape

After our applications to attend UWC were accepted, Stephen and I prepared to journey to Cape Town in February 1972. We bought appropriate clothing because Cape Town has hot summers and cold, wet winters. Our suitcases were bursting at the seams. We completed bursary application forms for funding. My Uncle Cyprian signed as guarantor for a Coloured Affairs Department bursary/loan for the princely sum of R200.00 for the year. I had applied to the National Department of Education for a bursary that was advertised in the *Rapport*, the Afrikaans Sunday newspaper. It was returned with a long pencil line drawn through the question: Race – Coloured. It was declined.

A huge going-away party was arranged by our former teachers and my family. The pride was palpable. Both Stephen and I were first-generation university students. A heavy burden of expectation rested on us. Mid-February we drove to Johannesburg Station to board the Trans-Karoo long distance train to Cape Town, second class with bedding included. Many of our family members were in attendance, prolonging the festive and jovial mood. My mother, Aunt Soph, took Stephen and I aside and just there we got our only sex education talk. "You boys," she said, "are now going to university, a thousand miles from home; you must be responsible. Forget the politics. Leave out the girls and if you can't, go to the chemist, spin a half crown, he will know what you want: condoms." That was the sum of sex education we received to date.

We got into our shared compartment after hugging and kissing everyone. The conductor gave a shrill whistle blow which announced that the train was about to depart. Slowly the train came to life, and we waved until our families were out of sight. Picking up pace, the clicking of the steel wheels on the tracks took on a rhythmic cadence, announcing the new phase in our lives with finality. We settled down, packed our bunks, arranged our luggage, then sat down to take in the passing scenery. Cape Town, here we come! We met two boys from

Eersterust also on their way to Bush, as we called UWC. We exchanged pleasantries. Both were going to do Science, and I declared my choice as well. Stephen was going to enrol for a BCom degree. After supper taken from our traditional *padkos* and some light-hearted talking, we got ready for our first sleep on the trip. The next morning, we had reached Kimberley and the engine was swapped from electric to coal-fired. The tracks from there to Laingsburg were not electrified. After a cowboy wash in the basin, we dressed up and tucked into our *padkos*. The stop was rather long. We got going, now with a different hiss and whistle of the train engine, and the environment also changed dramatically. We lounged and in between card games we soaked up the different towns and landscapes passing by.

The next morning, we reached the outskirts of Cape Town and from then on, the distance between towns shortened. We passed Bellville and reminded ourselves that this is the university town, but we headed for Cape Town. Here we were met by the sister of our landlady; her name has faded over time. She was Muslim. Johnny Issel arranged boarding for us. We loaded our luggage into her car and were driven through the early morning traffic of Cape Town to Surrey Estate. Driving through Athlone and Mowbray competing with human and vehicular traffic was a novel experience. The locals were loud. Buses were overloaded. The young *laaities* selling newspapers shouted at the top of their lungs: "Argus!" to attract buyers. It was vibrant.

We arrived at 22 Sirius Road which would become our home away from home, warmly welcomed by the Hajji all dressed up in typical Muslim dress. We were shown to our quarters. Stephen and I were to share a huge king size bed; the single bed was reserved for Johnny, who would arrive later. There were two desks, three chairs and a wardrobe for our clothes. We unpacked and acclimatised to our new home. Just then there was a call to prayer by the muezzin. The realisation dawned on us that we were living in a Muslim township, and in future our day would be interspersed by these calls to prayer.

We had a light lunch, Redro fish paste sandwiches and tea. We then went outside to savour the clean air and Table Mountain, which could be seen in between the houses from where we lived. The township was bustling with people and vehicles. There was a spicy smell hanging in the air and the language and faces were different. We stood out like sore thumbs, the locals gawking at us and immediately noticing we were foreign, especially in our style of clothing.

After supper we set our alarm for six o'clock to have sufficient time to travel to Bellville where UWC was located. We were up early and took time to shower and dress for the new day. We had a light breakfast, grabbed notepads, and then headed for the bus stop on Modderdam Road in the direction of Bellville. When the bus arrived, it was overflowing, but the conductor coaxed us to get in. We squeezed in between the fellow passengers, who all just looked ahead of them enduring the congestion. The bus gurgled and started moving along past Nico Malan Nursing College, took a left turn and then over the N2, past Bonteheuwel and the peri-urban area of Matroosfontein before we reached our stop opposite the main entrance of UWC. We alighted and joined a growing crowd of students around the entrance. It was only after an hour that a staff member drove towards us and 'invited' us to enter and move on to the main lecture hall in the Arts Block.

We all squeezed into the Arts 20 lecture hall and our orientation commenced. The layout of the campus was explained. After exercising our choice of faculty and subjects, we were separated accordingly: Arts, Commerce and Science. The latter group was directed to N20 to the sound of continuous whistling. I later learned that it was the Science Faculty's way of instilling fear and awe among the students. I met up with the two students from Eersterust and we marched to N20. Upon arrival we entered the auditorium, the seating sloped upwards with huge posters on the wall of acid strengths and E_0 numbers. It was intimidating. Further orientation

followed and we completed admission forms to indicate our subject choices. We explored the campus to locate the cafeteria and library and checked out the hostels. We did not get place at the hostel so had to become *oppidanis*, day students.

We were confused and exhausted from an information overload, despite the session being called 'orientation'. Stephen and I were the only first year students from Reiger Park and we both felt lost and rather ostracised. There were three senior students from Reiger Park: Johnny Issel, Andrew le Roux and Cravin Collis who would only arrive much later. We had to find our feet, each in his own faculty. Long after lunch we made our way back to Surrey Estate, hitchhiking for the first time in my life. It was an unnerving new experience that I had to get familiar with because public transport on Modderdam Road was erratic. We arrived 'home', had something to eat and then chilled. Supper took a long time to be served, but then we realised that the sun set after eight o'clock in summer and we had to adjust to eating supper with the sun still high in the sky. Adjustments, adjustments.

The following day I arrived at the Science block to complete the registration process. I searched for my Eersterust friends, but they were nowhere to be found, and I have not seen them since. And so started my tertiary education in science, with the big four subjects: Botany I, Zoology I, Chemistry I, and Physics I. My first big decision was to decide which language to use as medium of instruction, as Afrikaans was my medium at school. I chose English for the two new subjects, chemistry and physics, and Afrikaans for botany and zoology, my pet subjects. I immediately had to adjust to a new routine: lectures in the morning and tutorials or laboratory work until five o'clock in the afternoon. I cut a lonely figure hitchhiking after classes back to Surrey Estate. It was tough going. I got 28% for my first Physics test, quite a dent for my ego. Physical chemistry was not too bad as I could manage 40%; the pass rate was set at 33.3%. As for Bot and Zoo, I adjusted very well except for the pace of work and rapid accumulation of information to be digested. I had to struggle alone with little support.

Johnny had joined us at the Hajji. He was a third-year student operating at a different level, and we hardly saw him. He was doing Psych III and Philosophy III. He was also actively involved in student politics and served on the executive committee of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO). He was an activist by choice.

Although we lived together and shared a room as students, we were living separate lives because of the different fields of study we had chosen. Living together, though, provided camaraderie for those difficult days when you needed a shoulder to lean on. Respite came when we travelled home after the first term. It was unnerving how quickly people back home 'forgot' about you. I suppose it was out of sight, out of mind.

In June we headed back by train for the mid-year break, but this time the trip was different. A familiarity had crept in. A different group of students became our travel companions and the trip seemed faster. During the break I headed out to TMSA in Springs and applied for a job. We were two candidates who were interviewed there and then and were asked questions like the circumference and radius of a circle. As a first-year science student, I could answer the questions and got the job.

We arrived back in Cape Town in winter, the days were much shorter, and we had to hike in the cold winter rain. Student discontent picked up and on a sunny day we had a mass meeting protesting the high student fees, poor food in the hostel and other issues. We started marching from the Arts block to the Administration block singing revolutionary songs like "We shall overcome". The petition was handed over to the admin staff and we dispersed. I had an Organic Chemistry lecture and on arrival at N20, Prof Georges Delpierre stood waiting for us with his arms bulging with notes and papers. He snapped at us that if we didn't settle down, he would not

come back to present that lecture. We sucked up to the intimidation and sheepishly entered and he proceeded with the lecture. On a different occasion after returning from a similar march, Dr Hendrik Skinner from the Zoology Department confronted us by saying we better get in and overcome the test he had set.

I had adjusted to campus life and the rigours of academia. I was starting to understand Physics and Chemistry and my confidence picked up. During the year I learnt about the medical school in Durban. It was the only Black medical school and was attached to the University of Natal. I applied to transfer there in 1973, posted my application and forgot about it. One afternoon I had to collect something at the Administration block when I walked past the notice board and saw a letter addressed to me. The surprise was immediate: who would write to me? I retrieved the letter, opened it, and read the first line: "We have great pleasure in offering you a position to do second year medicine in 1973." I could have burst out of my skin! Alas, there was no one to share with in that moment. I had to wait for the evening to share with Stephen.

In September the faculty published the duly performed (DP) results. This was an agonising time of the year. Students who did not get a passing DP result could not sit for the end of year examinations. They had to get on 'the DP train' back home. I went to check my DPs. Just as I turned, I bumped into Dwight Triegaardt, a senior student from Reiger Park whom I did not know personally and who had spent several years at UWC studying towards a BSc degree. By 1972 he had done all the major subjects in general science. Because of his political activism, the powers that be came down on him, failing him in at least one major subject. Recognising me, Dwight stopped to enquire if I had a DP. I looked up and confirmed that I had. He stretched out his right hand and congratulated me. I not only got my DP but was exempted from writing the Botany exam, which presented me with an immediate problem. I wanted to do medicine the next year, I had been accepted for second year, so what now? That evening I agonised over it. Stephen did not make DP in one subject and after consoling each other I sought his advice. We agreed that I had to write Botany. The next day I went to the office of Dr P Pienaar, senior lecturer, to discuss my dilemma. After listening to me he exclaimed: "Maar dan goed so, meneer Andrews, jy kan maar skryf." A huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. I wrote the exam, and we returned home for Christmas.

That December, with the help of Mr Andy Solomons, I got a job at Conbrako, an engineering company. I was hired to assist with year-end stock taking. My friend Stephen found himself a job at the Johannesburg City Council. Andy arranged a Christmas party for all the staff, and we all got into the spirit of things. I even drank two glasses of beer. Andy must have noticed that I was getting tipsy, and he promptly drove me home. I was staying with my sister and recovered at her house in Jerusalem. They were unaware of my state because I immediately made a beeline for the bedroom and slept it off. I received my results and was thrilled to bits. I had passed all my subjects, even that dreaded Chemistry. I jumped and clicked my heels out of sheer excitement. In January 1973 I had to prepare to travel to Durban, having been accepted into second-year medicine.

Rude awakening in the Fairest Cape

Life on the Cape Flats, poverty, and social life

Arriving in Cape Town was a culture shock. The scenic beauty hid an undercurrent of social discontent. The National Party at some point declared the Cape Town area a "Coloured Preferential Area" regarding employment. Yet competition for unskilled jobs was fierce to the extent that Coloured people became prejudicial towards Black people, easily calling them the K-word. Poverty among Coloured people was widespread. One morning Stephen and I took a

short route to the bus stop when a figure emerged from a pile of corrugated iron sheets. All she had on was a bloomer that stretched to just under her breasts. I could barely hold back the shock. After the Coloured population was forcibly removed from District Six and resettled on the Cape Flats they were housed in multiple townships of multi-storey flats, with high population density and people eking out livings, competing among themselves for space and economic opportunities. It was a recipe for social conflict.

On a Saturday morning Johnny and I were on our way back from the library in the centre of town. On our way to the bus stop on the parade we were accosted by gangsters for no reason at all. Johnny assumed a boxing stance and took them on. I suppose when they saw it was not going to be easy to subdue and pickpocket us, they left, and we got onto the bus back to Surrey Estate.

On one occasion Stephen and I ventured to Nico Malan Nursing College one Friday evening to attend a dancing session. The young nurses were beautiful. We stood out sporting our Afro hairstyles and what the locals called 'funny pants' with turn ups. There was a definite hostility towards us. We were unaccompanied and any attempt to get a dance partner was denied. We felt ostracised.

This hostility extended towards students in general. There were forever clashes between *skollies* (thugs) and students walking to campus. On another occasion we went to a dancing session at the cafeteria on campus. Halfway through *skollies* ran into the venue and students were chased. Johnny was again sparring with them in the middle of the dance floor, some dancers were plastered against the wall while others crowded into the toilets jumping through the windows, and it was confusion par excellence. That was the last dancing session I attended.

All was not lost. Johnny had family staying in Heideveld, a township adjacent to Surrey Estate. On our first Friday evening stroll to Heideveld to pay the Issel family a visit, we walked past a clearing where a makeshift structure stood. People rushed out, a husband and wife, shouting at each other and exchanging expletives. We were minding our own business when the man turned on us. He started pelting us with stones. We got to our destination much quicker than we anticipated. The rest of the evening went off gloriously. Mr Issel, Johnny's uncle from Worcester, had married a Muslim woman; they had two daughters, Shahida and Ayesha, and a toddler son. At the end of the evening, we made our way back to Surrey Estate, and we had to walk past that quarrelsome family again. We armed ourselves with stones but reached home without the need to use them.

Three-quarters through the year we were joined by Andrew Opperman, a lad from Reiger Park. He was housed in a different room at the Hajji. At the end of his first month with us we went out to celebrate with Andrew. We went to the local wine bar and indulged in Paarl Perle, a cheap wine. It was my first time sipping the nectar of the Gods and after two drinks we marched back home with our spirits rising as we got closer to Hajji's house. We slipped in and rushed into our room. Just as we entered, "Take Five" by Dave Brubeck was playing on the radio. Stephen turned up the volume and we started dancing. It was not long before there was a knock on the door, which I answered. The Hajji said in a respectful way, using the typical double address form in Afrikaans: "Tony, Tony-hulle maak geraas, Tony." I apologised and on turning around my roommates were under the covers. We slept like babies.

For all these reasons – *skollies*, hiking in the cold winter rain and the severe poverty – I vowed that I did not like the Cape.

47
Medical school

University of Natal (Black Section)
Alan Taylor Residence and training at a Black Medical School

At the beginning of 1973 my family, once again, assembled at the train station, this time in Germiston, to see me off to medical school. The novelty had diminished somewhat, and the crowd was much smaller. I was travelling alone this time. When the train arrived, I found my compartment in the second-class section. I said goodbye to all present and got into the train.

I was sharing the compartment with a middle-aged Zulu gentleman. I greeted in English and Zulu, and he reciprocated in typical Zulu style: "Yebo". We settled down and got ready for the trip, which was much shorter this time, just an overnight journey. In the passage I met two young men, Shots Pooe and Mokone Mokone. After exchanging pleasantries, I learnt that they were also on their way to med school. I returned to my compartment in time for supper. My companion and I both produced our *padkos* and shared a meal together. The old man offered me smoked chicken. Later, we turned in and had a pleasant sleep, waking up the next morning as we were cruising through the Natal midlands. The traditional Zulu villages en route were quaint and picturesque. The train pulled into the old Durban station and my new friends told me that we had to walk across to the bus station to catch a bus to Wentworth, where the residence was located. We grabbed our suitcases and started dragging our luggage to the bus stop, in the February heat in Durban. I was not prepared for that.

We reached the bus stop on the verge of the fresh produce market and the place was chaotic. We got onto the Warangal Road bus, an Indian-owned private bus. We found seats and sat down for the trip that took us past the fresh produce market, through the centre of town, past the Alhambra Theatre and the Durban Technical College and the Congella area, where my friends pointed out the medical school on the grounds of the King Edward VIII Hospital. The bus proceeded through an Indian

township called Clairwood, we then reached Jacobs and drove through Wentworth/Merewent down to Tara Road where we alighted opposite the entrance gate of the Alan Taylor Residence, next to the oil refinery. We proceeded to the dining hall where we were allocated rooms. I stayed in the Mosquito block. I walked into my tiny single accommodation room, 2.5m x 2.5m, but it had a bed and a wardrobe. A short tour was arranged to point out the important features. Alan T, as we called it, was a World War II barracks that belonged to the Mobil oil refinery but was rented by the University of Natal. The buildings were all clinker-finished structures; at the entrance were classrooms for students doing the preliminary and first-year studies. A row of long and high buildings along Tara Road served as a garage and at the far end housed the student clinic called 'The Happy Valley Clinic.' Then there were three rows of buildings that were the male student rooms. The dining hall was in the second row next to the house for the residence manager. The common room was opposite the dining room. A big communal hall was just next to the dining room. The ladies' block was short and fenced in.

That evening I strode over to the dining room for supper and met Filip Teise, a Coloured student from a town called Luckhoff in the southern Free State, who would become a friend for life. Students filed in and supper was served amid a din of excited students returning to face the new academic year. After supper I went back to my room. Filip was staying in the same block two doors away from me. Later, in the toilet, I met Saxon Mogale. We introduced ourselves next to the crib, while the oil refinery emitted a continuous high-pitched whine. The evening heat was just about bearable. I went back to my room and slept in my new environment, which would be home for the next five years.

Medical school

Learning amid poverty and want

The University of Natal, Medical Faculty (University of Natal Black Section [UNB], for Black students) was in the suburb of Umbilo. Alan Taylor residence was in Merewent/Wentworth, a Coloured township. We had to take a bus into town to get to the medical school. Two options were available: the green Durban Corporation buses or the Indian-owned buses via Warangal Road.

After a hearty breakfast my new friend Filip Teise and I took the cheaper Warangal Road bus and patiently wound our way through the various suburbs between Wentworth and Umbilo. The bus dropped us off in Sidney Road opposite the entrance to the famous King Edward VIII Hospital. I followed Filip along a winding passageway to the west entrance of the medical school. The building was a brown face-brick structure, a four-storey building with animal cages on the roof level. I was orientated by Filip about the layout: the ground floor was occupied by the cafeteria and the anatomy department on the south side. Lecture Room 1 (L1) on the same level had an entrance on the west side of the building opposite the main entrance from the west. The second floor was home to the Physiology and Pharmacology departments, and the Pathology department was on the third floor. The library was housed on this floor as well.

All the second-year students were assembled in L1, and for the first time I met my other seventy-nine fellow students. We were the first big class, more than twenty-five students. Most students were Black, followed by students of Indian descent, and there were five other Coloured students. The registration and brief orientation were concluded, and I hit my first problem. Mrs Whitby, the administrator, informed me that I had to submit my birth certificate; mine was lost with all the moving between the different family members. She collected some information; a further complication was that I was born in Swaziland, so this was a cross-border operation. She undertook to apply for a replacement on my behalf.

We then proceeded to the cadaver room where

lists were up indicating the pairing and tables we were allocated. After sorting out the layout amid the pungent smell of formalin, the embalming fluid used to preserve the bodies, we all made it to our tables, where I met my table mate, J Mariba, who was also a new student coming from the north of the country and who had obtained a basic degree. Like soldiers we lined up and were orientated by Prof Keen and the protocols of the cadaver room were explained. At the end of his address, we were told to remove the plastic and cloth covering the body. Nobody fainted; I was surprised. The table assistants, Drs Klaas Mogotlane and Jay Govind, very quickly got us going to master cadaver dissections. It then turned out that Mogotlane and I came from Stirtonville. This led to a long-term camaraderie.

So started my second orientation to university life, this time complicated by the fact that the teaching language was English. I had to adapt very fast to taking notes in English and conversing predominantly in English. For an Afrikaans-speaking Transvaler this was a tall order. No time was wasted. The next day lectures commenced, and we had practicals in the afternoon, alternating between cadaver dissections and physiology practicals. The pace was at breakneck speed. I had to keep up. When all the students arrived back from holidays, I met more Coloured students with whom I could at least converse in Afrikaans: Teise (third year) was from Luckhoff in the Free State, Michael Hendricks (fourth year) was from East London and Terence Carter (fifth year) came from Noordgesig (colloquially called Bulte), Johannesburg, next to Soweto. Terence turned out to be the joker in the group. He confronted me by asking: "Where are you from?" I answered innocently: "From Reiger Park in Boksburg." He responded by saying: "You are from a township, and you cannot even talk tsotsitaal!" to the delight and laughter of my new-found group. But this was the start of a lifelong friendship.

In March I was summoned by Mrs Whitby; she had received the birth certificate and had acquired a Coloured Affairs bursary for me to pay the outstanding amounts on my fees. What a relief. Mrs Whitby was loved by all students for the practical way she assisted in getting us out of these difficulties. She is truly an unsung heroine.

On Sundays I would do duty at 'The Happy Valley Clinic', a student-run facility funded by donations from the public. As a second-year student I started off in the admission room, preparing out-patient files or retrieving files as patients reported. Sometimes I ventured into the treatment room to assist with wound dressings. Skills development depended on voluntary work. It was also on-the-job training that was valuable for the future. Some Sundays I would alternate by visiting the local Methodist Church in Wentworth named Assegai Methodist Church.

The second half of the year went by so quickly, it still is a blur. The exams were written in November. In Physiology a trick practical nearly spoilt it for me. In Anatomy, Prof Keen's practical involved identifying anatomical structures pinned with different coloured pinheads. I passed to my great delight. I had mastered English and the contents of second year on my first attempt!

I returned home to Boksburg, staying with my sister Brenda (Lucy) and her husband Pat; they had moved to their own house in Jerusalem. As luck would have it, I found a job at Dorman Long, an engineering company, as a first aid assistant; after all, I had passed Anatomy and Physiology at second-year level. I was given a lily-white laboratory coat and placed in the emergency room, reporting to a retired Black male nurse. I discovered that the administration office in the workshop was manned by three Coloured fellows; one of them was Nieto le Roux from Reiger Park. During lunch time I walked from my 'office' to have lunch with the clerks. One funny situation at work was when Nieto came by while I was reading the newspaper. We got into discussing the politics of the day when

the Managing Director sped by and just turned his head towards us. Recognising him, Nieto got onto the examination couch and by the time the MD came by again, I was fiddling in Nieto's eye. It was a close shave. I worked for two months and earned sufficient income to pay for my trip back to Durban and food for half a year.

I returned to medical school in 1974 invigorated and ready to face the subjects of Pathology (Prof P Wainwright) and Pharmacology (Prof W Leary). My level of confidence was boosted by the fact that I got through second year without a sub. Prof Wainwright was a formidable teacher of the old school, chalk and talk, but extremely effective. We were paired off and had to assist at a post-mortem; take organ specimens and send them off for slide preparation. A week later the case had to be presented to our fellow students, going through clinical features, the post-mortem finding and presenting the slides taken during the post-mortem. From all of this you had to frame a differential diagnosis and at the end provide a summary of the pathophysiology of the case. Phenomenal new skills were learned: gathering medical evidence, sifting through special investigations then theorising about the clinic-pathological course. Fellow students would pick holes in your arguments. It was a daunting but valuable learning experience, especially the element of defending your knowledge and arguments in public; as my mother used to say: "You must learn to think on your feet."

The lecturer that taught us Histology was Dr S Kallichurum, a chain-smoking and very stern female doctor. Prof A Joubert was an English-speaking Afrikaner heading the Chemical Pathology Department. My favourite memory about him was his quip on the use of alcohol: "Your bacteria in your gut make more than a tot of alcohol, so you can have a sip at supper."

I had a scare during the year. Dr Y Asmal was conducting research and I volunteered. Blood specimens were drawn, and I had forgotten about it when one morning he pounced on me: "Andrews, do you know your cholesterol is high?" In a baffled state I just shook my head. He did not skip a beat and posed the next question: "What did you eat for breakfast?" I admitted having indulged in an Alan Taylor breakfast egg. He admonished me to fast and return to redo the test, the result of which was normal on the second occasion. This encounter scared me so much that from then on, I ate eggs sparingly, just one at a time. It might have been a prelude to underlying diabetes mellitis which manifested when I turned forty.

Friends since Medical School: Me, Filip Teise, Michael Hendricks and Terence Carter (Andrews collection).

I progressed to work in the dispensary at Happy Valley Clinic and learned to inject our trusting patients.

My fourth year, in 1975, marked the changeover from fundamental learning to clinical application. Right at the beginning of the academic year we were all issued with a stethoscope donated by the 3M Company. Henceforth we were now actually 'doing' medicine and not just 'reading' medicine. The class was divided into groups and assigned different units in Medicine: Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G). By this time my confidence also peaked and, with so much repetition, learning became easier. We were let loose into the wards to

examine patients and to learn bedside medicine, the gathering of medical evidence to make a differential diagnosis and the ordering of special investigations to confirm the diagnosis and apply appropriate management for the patient.

Those were long days: morning lectures and then practicals in the afternoon., We got back to Alan Taylor after 17:00, depending on public transport. Just sufficient time to unpack your school bag, refresh somewhat, and then by 18:00 line up outside the dining hall for supper. Those early birds formed a tight group: Filip Teise, B Mageza, Abes Mayet and I. The group grew the closer we got to six o'clock. This waiting period provided us an opportunity to socialise and engage in casual everyday talk besides the current politics. This led to in-depth and passionate debates. These sessions were also called *mlevu*, 'talk' in isiZulu. Dinner time was always a noisy period as the students piled in for the one time of day when most students were in attendance. It was organised chaos.

As a clinical student I could now work as a 'physician' at the Saturday outreach clinics and at the Sunday Happy Valley Clinic sessions. I felt useful and of service to our indigent patients.

The annual Student Conference was planned for May-June of 1975. My colleague Cunnavadee Moodley and I worked on a paper, "What you prescribe and what the patients take." This was an exercise to test patients' adherence to treatment and our paper was awarded second place. We lost to a final-year student who presented a paper on the effects of Tyramine in the management of hypertension.

I also entered student politics and stood for elections on the Medical Students Representative Council (MSRC). After vote counting, I received the lowest votes but was given the portfolio of Treasurer of the MSRC. As a body we only had one meeting before year-end and by the following year our term ended with very little achievements.

Over December 1975 I travelled home, given a lift by Abes Mayet who lived in Benoni. When I offered to pay, he refused to take my money. This kind of benevolence was not what I ever expected. I remain indebted to Abes for his kindness.

During my fifth year, 1976, we concentrated on Psychiatry. We went to the psychiatric hospital in Pietermaritzburg for chronic cases, and for acute cases we attended the out-patient section. I found Psychiatry woolly, and integration of the subject took time. Midway through the year, June 16 erupted. Black students in Soweto revolted against the imposition of Afrikaans as a teaching language. The 'unrest' quickly spread nationally from Cape Town to Musina and Durban to Mafikeng. Our student body also marched, and a lot of students were detained, not least the chairman of the Medical Students Representative Council, Eddie Mhlanga. It took a while for conditions to return to normal, but it was never the same.

Prof D Creighton in O&G had left the department after controversial abortion issues; Dr E Mokgokong was acting in the position. The university administration decided to appoint a White senior consultant to the post, to the consternation of the student body. We went on strike again, congregating at the entrance to the university in Umbilo Road. Speaker after speaker was deriding the decision and condemning the blatant racial discrimination. During this commotion a Black caregiver was trying to find his way through the crowd carrying a White child on his side. This was like adding fuel to a fire, and the student body erupted.

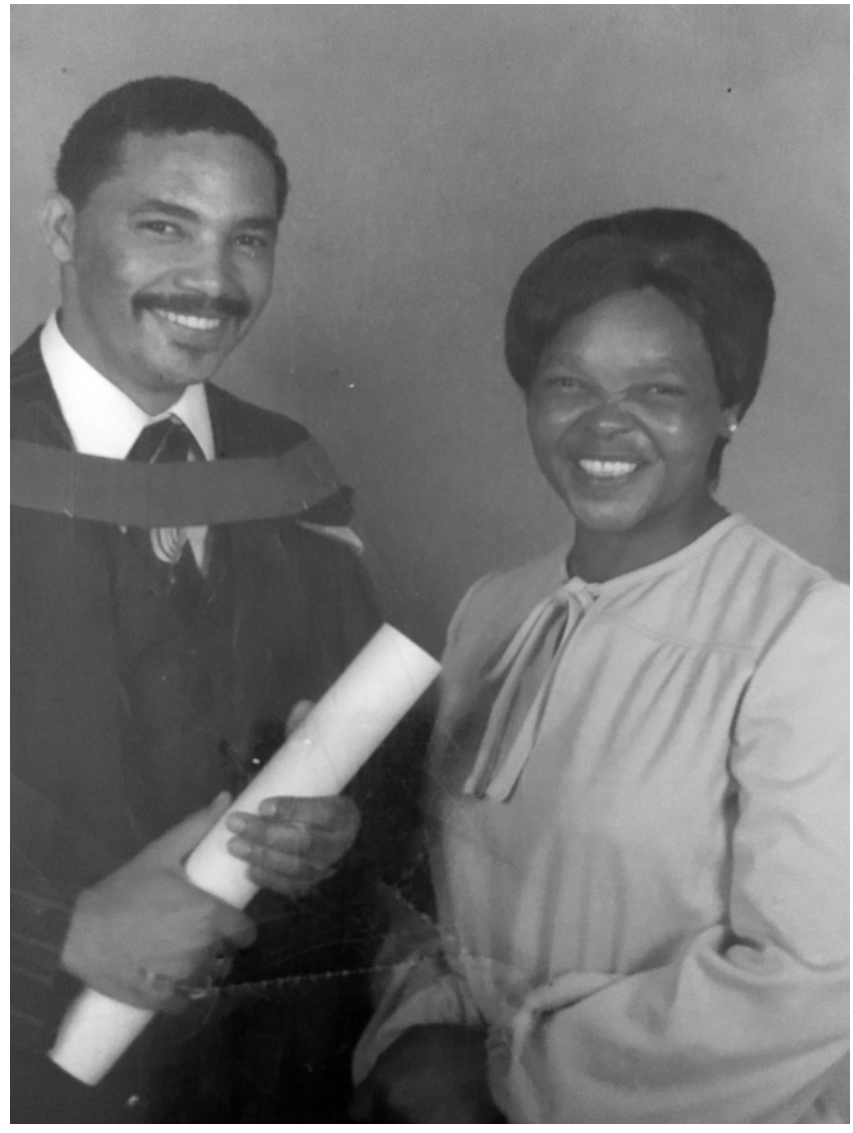
Dr Mokgokong was not appointed. Instead, Prof Philpot was recruited from Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) to head the department. With the celebration of the 25th year of the UNB, most of the professorial and senior posts were occupied by White staff. This glaring discrimination did not go unnoticed. The most senior Black professional was Dr YK Seedat in the department of medicine. Competent Black

surgical consultants were not being promoted to senior academic posts.

At Alan Taylor the residence students went on a food boycott, and the administration decided to close the residence. Fortunately, I could find temporary accommodation with Filip, who was staying with his young family in Reiger Road in Wentworth. He took care of me until we could get back to the residence.

We wrote examinations in two subjects: Psychiatry and Forensics. I passed to progress to my final year. I went home and called on Dr L Cutting, to re-establish our acquaintance. He was happy to see me and offered that I could sit in with him during consultations, a welcome elective period. As a registered student I could and grabbed the opportunity for the elective period. He was so generous that at the end of my stint he paid me an ample stipend. I was thankful for the in-service training and mentoring.

In 1977 I entered my final year to face the three major subjects: Medicine, Surgery and Obstetrics & Gynaecology. All students also had to do a practical stint in the labour ward and had to stay at the student accommodation on the university grounds, Impala House. We stayed with special consent because of the Group Areas Act.



On graduation day with my mother, Sophie (Andrews collection).

My group was allocated to Dr Martin Marivate for O&G, Mr Fred Luvuno for surgery and Prof EB Adams in medicine. We were subjected to intensive exposure to practical application combined with high-powered enquiry sessions called 'The Grand Ward Round' where serious/difficult cases were debated and explored and provided exposure to polite but robust debates on medical decision-making. Medicine was both a science and an art …

I was now a senior student and could consult on my own at the Happy Valley Clinic where I did duty on Sundays. My most memorable patient was an eight-year-old Indian boy who presented with blisters on both legs and weakness. After my assessment I found him to be anaemic, with an enlarged spleen and made the provisional diagnosis of spherocytosis. I wrote a referral letter to King Edward Hospital for further investigation.

After several tests my diagnosis was confirmed, and I was congratulated by the housemen and junior registrars for having made the diagnosis. I polished my halo in private.

One week before we were to sit for the final external exams the government announced that from the following year all Black students would be routed to the newly established Ga-Rankuwa Medical School. This was such an affront in the prevailing political climate post June 1976. Our class held a meeting and after some deliberations voted to boycott the exams. Personally, this was a huge decision: a week from completing my degree I was boycotting the exams. I did not sleep that night. It took a week for the government to reverse its decision. They could not afford for nearly eighty medical students not to qualify. We returned to write freshly drafted exams but externally supervised to comply with Council rulings. Two weeks later I had passed and was getting ready for the Hippocratic Oath-taking ceremony. I had to share the news; I phoned my friend Brenda Weimers from a 'tickey box' phone booth at Alan Taylor Residence. My family unfortunately could not attend the Oath-taking ceremony; there was no clarity about dates and in the end no time to travel, and air travel was too expensive.

I was so emotional at the Oath-taking ceremony; to think I got so close to not qualifying. I was consoled that the sacrifice paid off and the attendance of Black students at UNB was never in doubt again. I went home to enjoy my last long holiday before the world of work unfolded; it was a well-earned break. I did not seek a job during my holiday but just chilled at home spending quality time with my family and friends. It was regenerative and very welcome.

Postgraduate achievements, paying back in service

On 1 January 1978 I signed in at the Doctors' Quarters on the grounds of King Edward VIII Hospital to commence my obligatory year as a houseman. The first semester I was allocated to the Professorial medical ward. White housemen were accommodated across the road, separate but definitely not equal. Yet our White colleagues tolerated this inequity. I was immediately seconded to the Respiratory Unit where patients with lockjaw (tetanus) were being treated. This was an interesting month because I had to quickly learn how to manage patients on ventilators, both children and adults. After morning ward rounds with the consultant, I would do follow-up duties and then retire to an on-call room where I could spend time studying respiratory ventilator care. After the initial month I transferred to the ward of Prof EB Adams and Dr K Simjee (a hepatologist).

We formed a close-knit team. Dr Simjee would assemble us on a Friday to share a drink at the local hotel in Umbilo. We had to use the Black entrance. This gesture fostered camaraderie and great teamwork. At the end of the semester Prof Adams invited the team to his house in Kloof for supper. I got a lift with Dr Simjee, and we arrived at the house early dusk, driving down a boulevard to a port cochère to be met by a butler. We were served entrée drinks and sat down to enjoy the most sumptuous fish meal I've eaten to date. Talks were not intensive but entertaining.

The next semester I started working in the O&G department under the tutelage of my mentor Dr Martin Marivate. This was a gruelling time, going into summer and enduring the Durban summer heat. As a houseman you were at the bottom rung; you just had to work. While in the labour ward, the sister cried "prolapsed cord", which created panic. The patient was assessed by Dr Marivate, who ordered an immediate caesarean section. The problem was that the obstetric theatre was in use. So, the order rang out: "Andrews, do a PV (vaginal examination) and relieve the pressure on the cord." I had to adopt that position for an hour waiting for the theatre to be prepared. We saved the baby's life.

On 28 May 1978 I got my driver's licence. In August I bought my first car, a light blue Fiat 128. I never had a single accident with that car; it just struggled up Fields Hill; I had to go down to first gear to inch up the incline. The end of the year I travelled home, proud to display my latest acquisition. The family was proud; nobody in the family had ever bought a car out of the box.

I had received a bursary loan from the Coloured Affairs department for a consolidated period of three years. Consequently, I was obliged to pay back in service or pay up. Because of my financial state I opted for the former. I therefore had to work for three years. Fortunately, they included my obligatory year as a houseman. So, in 1979 I commenced my senior housemanship. The first semester I spent in the surgery department under the consultant, Mr Fred Luvuno. He was a UNB graduate who obtained his fellowship in the United Kingdom, and I learnt a lot about practical surgery from him.

The next half of the year I spent in paediatric care under the tutelage of the consultant Dr Mackenjee. Paediatrics was very demanding and sobering. We were confronted by cases of severe protein malnutrition, babies whose skin was peeling, looking like burns; it was heart-rending. I also had the opportunity to do my first and only total blood transfusion on a baby with rhesus disease, without sophisticated high-care facilities, just there in the ward.

Worse still were the babies suffering from gastroenteritis and dehydration. There was a rehydration unit in paediatric outpatients to put up drips to save those lives. Once I was on duty when a mother just shoved her baby in front of me on the desk crying "Ufile!" (He is dead.) I had to console this distraught mother and hold back my own emotional discomfort. It was a humbling experience, illustrating the limits of our professional capacity. Triage failure…

In December 1979 I teamed up with Roderick (Rods) Davids, a theology student residing at Alan Taylor. We had booked in to visit the Kruger National Park. After a wonderful experience we drove home, which took ages as the speed limit was just 50 km/h. The route out of the park and driving through the Eastern Transvaal was breathtakingly beautiful. I dropped Rods off in Noordgesig and drove back to Reiger Park for the rest of my holiday.

I returned to Durban in 1980 having been accepted in a junior registrar post to do my anaesthetic training. There was no orientation. I was thrown in at the deep end after just a short set of instructions. Fortunately, I did some 'doping' cases as a houseman. After six months I enrolled to do the Diploma in Anaesthetics (DA), a postgraduate diploma that required work experience of six months before sitting for a formal exam.

At the beginning of February, I received a phone call to fetch a young student at the new Durban train station. On the date of his arrival, I met Billy Jacobs, whom I did not know. He said he recognised me because I looked like my brother Guy. By this time, I had changed cars. I had bought a Colt Galant, so we loaded his luggage and set off in the direction of Wentworth, more specifically Alan Taylor residence. I drove along the bus route, past the university and King Edward hospital, pointing out all the important landmarks. Seeing Billy safely settled in and after a quick orientation at Alan Taylor, I left, asking him to call should he need anything.

During the year, in the second half, I participated in research work. I collected the data to prove that the drug ranitidine was an effective pre-anaesthetic in cases requiring elevating of the pH in the stomach. The paper was published via the department, and I was mentioned as second author.

In November I sat for the DA exam, conducted at the King Edward VIII Hospital Nursing Home Hall. For once I was at complete ease writing an exam. For the practical part I had to travel to Johannesburg, Coronation (Corrie) Hospital. I flew into Jan Smuts

airport and slept at home in Reiger Park. I had arranged with Brenda Weimers for the loan of her car to drive to Corrie Hospital. By way of thanking her I bought Brenda a heart-shaped necklace. The white VW Beetle took me to Corrie. I parked the car on the pavement and went into the hospital complex following the signs for the exam location. I was greeted by an exam official who conducted me to the cubicle where the patient that I was to examine was waiting. He pulled the curtain and there was Mr Joe Eustace, sitting slouched over his knees. He raised his head and our eyes met. I greeted Uncle Joe and promptly excused myself. I went to the exam official to explain my dilemma. This patient is practically my father. I grew up in his household. My request for another patient was refused and I was left to examine Uncle Joe, who gladly consented. I presented my case. As I was familiar with his social history, I knew Uncle Joe's bad lungs were probably due to pulmonary TB. What followed was a session on instruments. They had assembled ancient instruments that one only encounters in the textbooks. It felt very strange and perplexing not having handled this equipment myself. I passed, but sadly could not attend the graduation ceremony due to work commitments.

My stint in the Anaesthetics department ended on 31 December 1980. I had arranged with Dr Cutting to join him as an assistant in 1981. So, on 1 January 1981 I packed my earthly belongings into my Colt Galant and headed for the N3 west to Reiger Park. About six hours later I arrived at my mother's house, 22 Jacaranda Street, and was warmly welcomed back at home, a promising young doctor. My mother prepared a hearty supper to welcome me home.

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Coming home

General Practice in Reiger Park

Moving back and the challenge of integrating back into the community

The first of January is a public holiday. I arrived home in a festive mood. Normally on 1 January people go to picnic spots to welcome in the New Year. My mom had stayed home in anticipation of my homecoming. We had a hearty home cooked dinner and for the first time I slept in my mom's new home. On 2 January 1981 I reported for duty at the rooms of Dr Lionel I Cutting and his wife Dr Elaine Roberts. They were excited to welcome me, and we had a short discussion and orientation. The new practice building they had erected was a single-storey structure with a waiting room and two consulting rooms separated by a dispensary. There was also an office space and a storeroom. I was allocated the second consulting room and started to work. The medical secretary, Ms Francis (Iyo) Williams, I had met, and she soon put me at ease and directed patients my way. During the lunch break we ordered my doctor's bag and other supplies. Dr Cutting also shared with me that he has accommodation available. His brother-in-law had moved out of a house he was in the process of acquiring, 829 William Greef St. If I was interested, I could move in, the same day. I agreed.

I went back to my mom's home and shared the story about the accommodation with her. I told her I already had the key and was moving the same day. She was extremely disappointed. The arrangement was that I would rent the house and as soon as the sale was concluded, I could buy the property. We signed a contract of employment as an assistant and separately, a rental agreement.

My general practice (GP) career had taken off. Part of my duties included providing relief for Dr Roberts at the Municipal Clinic where we provided cover for the TB service. In those early days I took time to re-acquaint myself with my family and friends and I looked up an old friend, Daniel Prince, who was still staying with his mom in Lupin Street. Stephen Eustace, my other friend, was also still

living in Cosmos St with his family. The patients readily took to this 'new' doctor. I did not have any issues relating to our clientele; it was easy to consult in Afrikaans and the patients appreciated the familiarity. Once those who did not know me personally realised that I was a local lad, it was easy to establish rapport. Because I had a DA, I could provide anaesthetic services for our patients referred to by a private surgeon. The surgeon turned out to be Dr Edel Morris. After re-introducing myself, he was pleasantly surprised about our common history. He had operated on me in 1967 and here I was, a qualified doctor/anaesthetist as a colleague. He examined my scars to refresh his memory. It was the start of a long professional relationship.

I also looked up colleagues from med school: Dr Zwane, who had set up a GP practice in Daveyton, and Dr Abes Mayet, who had a practice in Vosloorus. A classmate of Abes, Dr Manu Naik, had set up a GP practice in Boksburg North. One of my classmates, Dr Mwelase, was also practising from Daveyton. There were two other practices in Reiger Park: Dr Ebrahim, into whose surgery I was taken after my accident years ago, was the first GP in the area; then there was Dr Kamala Patel, who ran a practice from her house. Dr Ernest Banda was a contemporary of Dr Cutting. He did locums and relief stints but was in full-time employ at the East Rand Proprietary Mines (ERPM) hospital. Dr Banda also resided in Reiger Park, not far from the practice.

In May 1981 we were at the home of Daniel Prince, watching the FA Cup final on TV, when we heard a loud noise and then smelled tear gas. We got up to investigate, walking towards where the sound had come from. We arrived at the strip of land on which stood the businesses of Indian and Chinese traders. At the plot of the Gangadin family smoke was billowing skyward. The story we heard was that the second eldest son, called Abe, who was also a taxi owner, was involved in an altercation with local protesters seeking better living conditions and fairer business opportunities. The Gangadin homestead was burnt down, and the crowd turned their attention to the Indian traders. It was alleged that the traders did not want to move to make way for housing development along that strip of land. The mob started looting and burning the shops on the furthest east side. When the cops arrived, the mob moved to shops on the west side, alternating sites to fool the cops. The looting was bad. People were carrying goods on every available space on their bodies even though the tear gas hung heavily in the air. There was an unscripted though coordinated pillaging. The reason given was that people were tired of the 'exploitation'. The only two shops spared were those belonging to the Chinese trader and the surgery of Dr Ebrahim. They were told to vacate and as soon as that was done the building went up in flames. By day's end all the shops were gutted. Overnight it calmed down. The next morning, a Sunday, I was on my way to church and, driving past the surgery, I had to stop to witness how the corner store next to the surgery was being systematically attacked. One middle-aged lady had a pile of bricks and was pelting the building belonging to Mr Simon Mentor, one of the local politicians. With every throw she would cry out: "Ek is moeg van julle corruption!" The attendant crowd was jubilant and participated in the mob vandalism.

One of the protest posters read: "Alpha is nie verniet nie". This alerted the Special Branch and they descended on the township, starting to arrest anyone considered to be connected to the mayhem. My friend Henry (Bok) Jeffreys became accused number one. He was a reporter at a daily newspaper. The month of May was deep into winter and Jeffreys related how he and the others were arrested at three o'clock the Monday morning, among them Coloured taxi owners and other political activists. Jeffreys, because of his connections, was alerted and he was ready, dressed in four layers. The others suffered the cold for lack of preparedness. All the accused were assembled

and the sergeant, who had a deformity of his left hand, held up a poster with his deformed left hand about Alpha. He said: "I know pain. You will have to tell us about this organisation Alpha, or else we will squeeze it out of you". Bok related how grown men started crying, declaring their innocence. Later it surfaced that Alpha was the local undertakers. Reluctantly the Special Branch had to accept this piece of information and released the accused, to appear in court later. The subsequent court case fizzled out and the accused were dismissed for lack of evidence. A quasi-political win was scored. The Indian traders moved out and the land was prepared for housing. Reiger Park had some colourful names for subsections. The development on the vacated strip of land became known as Opmekaar; other areas are called Fast Move, Excuse Me and MM (Ma se moer).

On 28 May 1981 I married Lynette Fourie in Eersterust. My father-in-law, Mr Peter F Fourie, was the long-serving principal of the primary school that was named after him. I met him in his retirement and our relationship was warm and respectful. I later learnt he was also involved in the management committee for years. On 29 May we were witnesses at the marriage of Stephen and Audrey. My long-time friend became family as Audrey is my cousin. The next day they moved to Ennerdale on the southeast of Johannesburg.

Lynette and I settled into our new home. As a teacher she transferred to teach at Lakeside Primary School. She adjusted well to her new circumstances, fitting in with her new colleagues at school. In September 1981 we had a freak storm and snow, and Lynette stayed home as she was pregnant. On the first of December, her birthday, we sat down to supper to celebrate.

After supper I went outside to survey the yet undeveloped garden. While outside, I heard my name called out loudly. I knew something was wrong if I was called by my full name. I rushed back to find Lynette bleeding, antepartum haemorrhage.

My children Angelique, Anthony and Amy with their dad (Andrews collection).

Pandemonium ensued. I called Dr Cutting to let him know about my catastrophe. I also had to excuse myself because I was on call for the evening. I called Dr Ashley Rayman, the obstetrician, who instructed us to proceed to the St Mary's Hospital. Lynette was wrapped in blankets and bundled into the car, and we set off for Johannesburg, a 30km journey. As fate would have it, it was early evening and traffic was beginning to die down, but every traffic light turned red, to test my patience and control. We arrived at the hospital, and I explained our situation. Arrangements had been made for admission. Then we had to go through the administrative procedure and my mind was on all the complications my wife could suffer, but they were unperturbed. Dr Rayman appeared. He assessed Lynette and ordered an immediate emergency caesarean section. I offered to do the anaesthetic, but he turned to me and said: "My wife, not yours!"

I was relegated to the waiting room, pacing up and down like a caged animal. About an hour later Dr Rayman came to tell me it was a close encounter;

fifty percent of the placenta had infarcted, died. It was miraculous that our baby survived. Angelique, my miracle baby, was kept in paediatric ICU while Lynette healed. A week later I fetched them, my young family reunited.

Angelique had an uneventful childhood until when she was about four years old. I had climbed on the roof to fix some tiles when, as I was struggling alone, I heard "Hello Daddy." It was Angelique at the top of the ladder! I froze, thinking about possible newspaper headlines: 'Irresponsible father allowed his child to climb up a ladder.' I finished off immediately, gently climbed back trying not to excite Angelique, I took her in my arms and gently descended. Down on the ground I could not get a squeak out to chastise the child. The ladder was taken down immediately and I retired to recover from my shock.

We decided to treat Aunty Soph for her lifelong sacrifice for us. A trip to the Kruger National Park was arranged. We set off on a Friday morning and arrived after midday. After arrival we settled into our air-conditioned chalets. Later we assembled at the poolside for some drinks. The waiter came to ask for our choice of drinks. Aunty Soph was an avid reader of Mills & Boon, so when her turn came, she ordered a Martini. There was a momentary silence, then the waiter said: "Sure, Mrs." She had lived one of those Mills & Boon moments. She deserved it. After the sundowners she asked: "Is this how the other half lives?"

Angelique was confirmed at the Reiger Park Methodist Church. She was a gleaming candidate, a beautiful child, and a pioneer in her own right. She had opted not to continue at the St Dominic's High School after primary school and instead enrolled at Boksburg High School, which was now allowed after the relaxation of the strict enforcement of the Group Areas Act.

My son, Anthony, was born on the 22 January 1985, also by caesarean section performed by Dr Rayman. There was no drama around his birth except to say he became the refined one in the family. He did fall on a coffee table. He knocked his head and was left with a gash across his left eyebrow. Lynette rushed him into the surgery, and I dropped everything to attend to my son. We patched him up and a little Panado syrup was all he needed.

When Anthony arrived, the Reiger Park Educare Centre had started as a pre-school where Lynette was managing the facility, so he started school very early on. He was a natural when it came to learning. By the age of ten, at primary school – Christian Brothers' College – he was singing in the choir. It was great attending those training sessions watching and listening to the angelic voices of the boys' choir. He maintained first or second position in class. The only physical sport he was interested in was hockey, but he was no super athlete. We did father-son activities like fishing, but this was not a great past-time. When he reached matric, at the prize-giving he raked in all the prizes. The principal would call out his name for the Afrikaans prize and as he walked off, recall him for the English prize. Amy, his younger sister from my second marriage with Brenda Weimers, would shout out: "Yes, yes." He eventually passed matric with a full house of A's. He was extremely adventurous and competitive as well. Just before matriculating he entered a speech competition and made it into the finals, just to achieve second place on the final evening. He had memorised the speech and was delivering it by heart. Only on concluding did he consult the page which simply read: "Thank you", to a standing ovation.

In 1988 the petrol price was extremely volatile. The local petrol station owner, Mr C Louw, approached me with a proposition. There was going to be an increase in the petrol price, and he did not have sufficient funds to buy stock. Would I like to venture in providing funds to fill his petrol tanks? After some mental calculations and assessing the risk, I agreed on the proviso that I get repaid

before the end of that month so I could pay my tax. That was the quickest R2 000.00 I ever earned. It also came just in time because we were arranging a surprise party for Aunty Soph's sixtieth birthday. We booked a private room at the Holiday Inn at the Jan Smuts Airport and invited all her siblings and surviving spouses of her deceased brothers. On her birthday, 28 August, I fetched her at home and drove to the venue under the guise that we were going out for supper; she was dressed to the nines. I parked the car and with arms linked, guided her into the hotel. At the venue I opened the door to let her in. She was greeted by an excited crowd of her peers. Once she realised what was happening, she broke down and sobbed out of sheer delight. We had a fantastic celebration, an opportunity to thank not only Aunty Soph but also the entire extended family for all their support over the years. The gesture was well appreciated.

My son, Anthony, decided to take a post-matric gap year. All the arrangements were made for him to spend a year in Germany. He ended up in Heidelberg with a mixed couple: a Hindu (Krishna) dad and a German mom. They soon pulled his meat tooth, and he became vegetarian. He attended the local school and mastered the German language. The gap year experience proved to be very beneficial to his growth. He travelled internationally and was exposed to different cultures and religions. All of this engendered a spirit of tolerance and awoke a deep sense of religiosity, so much so he returned to Germany after completing his journalism degree at Rhodes, to participate in church planting in Berlin. He also benefited from the 'free' tertiary education in Germany by completing an MA (Economic Journalism). He obtained German citizenship after seven years. Herr Anthony. This was preceded by the emotional time of giving up his South African citizenship. He phoned me on the day he had to hand in his South African identity document and said in a croaky voice: "Dad, I am now stateless …" and then sobbed deeply.

Phase of settling in

1981-85, General Practice work in a disadvantaged setting

I was fortunate in having had Dr Cutting as a mentor. He was conservative with an extremely prudent financial approach. He taught me medical practice management. We probably were the first practice in 1981 that adopted computer-based account submission due to his skill. By 1982 I had completed my associate time and we signed a partnership agreement: a three-way split between Cutting, Roberts and myself, a lucrative deal in my view. In August 1982 Cutting approached me and declared he was tired. He needed some time out and wanted me to take over the practice. I was flabbergasted! Initially I thought he was joking but as the discussion progressed, I discovered he was very serious. Our partnership was just eight months old and here I was confronted by the opportunity to take over the practice. I requested that he allow me to sleep over this momentous proposition, to which he agreed.

The next day we met and I declared that I was prepared to take on the challenge. We agreed to the following terms:

1. I was buying the practice 'voetstoots';
2. I was to rent the building with the option to buy;
3. Cutting was to provide administrative support and computer-based submission of accounts and reconciliation of accounts; and
4. Cutting insisted, because of the size of the practice, that I had to get somebody to share the workload.

I recruited Dr Ronnie Kyd, who was a contemporary at medical school, to join me as an assistant. I managed to arrange accommodation for him and his young family. They settled in and we were a team for five years. By 1984 I had repaid my loan for the purchase of the practice, so I approached Dr Cutting to buy the building, to which he agreed.

Over the years I got involved with community projects like helping the Reiger Park Alcoholics Anonymous society (AA) to provide medical cover for their patients. Serving on their executive committee, I was involved with fundraising to refurbish the old Superintendent's Office into a Social Work Office and counselling facility.

With fellow former scholars from Oosrand High School, we formed the East Rand Alumni Society. I was elected to serve as the first chairman. After several meetings and deliberations, it was decided to stage an "An Evening for Unsung Heroes." The evening was a huge success and we shed some of our acquired image as an elitist organisation. A poignant moment was when Mr Shapiro got up to give a speech. His most gripping sentence was: "I thought that I am working in a kraal developing soccer for the young boys; thank you for having noticed my efforts and acknowledging my contribution."

Next, we had identified pre-schooling as a dire need because the attrition rate between primary school and high school was 80%, and it had not diminished. As a result of the positions held by the members, contact was made with potential donors. The company Shulton SA provided sponsorship and land was acquired, an architect appointed and construction to build a preschool proceeded. The preschool was the initial project. We also established a Reiger Park Trust with an Old Mutual Policy to establish the Reiger Park Bursary Fund, to help fund tertiary studies for students from Oosrand Secondary School.

Dr Kyd announced that he was relocating to Ugie to be closer to his family and to set up a rural practice. Fortunately, I learnt that Billy Jacobs had completed his housemanship and on enquiry was available to join me in the practice. As he was a young doctor and fresh from completing his housemanship, I arranged accommodation for him and his young family, the arrangement being that I buy the property and when he was financially ready would have an option to purchase the property. That was the start of a mutually beneficial relationship. This relationship entailed an initial assistantship followed by an option for partnership. I introduced him to the staff at the Boksburg Health Department where it was agreed that Dr Jacobs would do duty at the TB Clinic in Reiger Park. And so, a partnership of two local doctors started off. It was a proud moment.

Just then the social order was ruffled. The White Conservative Party won the elections in Boksburg and promised to ensure strict apartheid. The Reiger Park community was immediately stirred. A new organisation was formed, The Save Boksburg Committee (SBC). The strategy adopted was to boycott the entire city centre and take our business to neighbouring towns. The SBC arranged for buses, especially over weekends to transport residents to the CBDs of Benoni and Germiston. When the community of Vosloorus joined in, Boksburg became a ghost town. I also selected Germiston to do my weekly banking at the Standard Bank. The boycott held out for close to a year. The Reiger Park and Vosloorus communities scored a major victory. But this still did not bring direct representation in the political structures…

I had bought my first big car out of the box, a BMW 7 series. My family went bonkers descending on me to find out why I spent so much money on a car that was the price of a house. My friend Leonard (Lenny) Miller and I took our families to Sonesta resort in Hawston, Hermanus, designated for Coloureds. Lenny drove a 5 series BMW and I my new 7 series. In Paarl we stopped to buy food. At the time we were not allowed to patronise the restaurants, so we ate our *padkos* inside the cars. When we went into the Laborie wine shop, we were refused service. Dejectedly we drove on to Hermanus. We had arranged for a caravan to be delivered on site. It was a two-day journey that went by quickly.

We arrived at the gate and enquired if the caravan had been delivered to our pre-booked site. The clerk

nodded with his head in the direction of a vehicle, our caravan. The problem was that neither of our vehicles had a tow bar. What now?! Lenny was an avid negotiator and in no time, somebody came by with a bakkie and hitched the caravan to it. The caravan was towed to site, parked at an incline and the Good Samaritan left. Neither family was trained in caravanning. My family jumped in and nearly careered down the incline. With help from our neighbours, we quickly learned how to stabilise the caravan, and the next step was to get the gas fridge going. We got it to work, and our holiday started. We had a week there until Christmas and got into the swing of holiday making. After the festive season we drove back and arrived safe and sound. Life continued.

Politically the country was in dire straits. There was a bush war going and the ANC was recruiting more and more fighters post the 1976 uprising. The sanctions were beginning to bite and foreign direct investment was dwindling., The state was near bankruptcy. We had to pay super tax, a marginal rate of 42%, to prop up the state. Then followed the Rubicon speech by President Botha and the next day the rand crashed…

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Into the New South Africa

Growth Phase

1986-1991, Extending range of services offered

The political climate was changing. The Tricameral Parliament was under severe pressure because decisions had to be ratified by the central government. The Bantustans were being granted self-rule but were financially dependent on the South African parliament. All these institutions were rejected by the Black community as puppet establishments.

By this time, I had repaid my loans and transferred the surgery property into my name. I had engaged an architect to redesign the surgery. In this process I discovered that the surgery was on two commercial stands with strict clauses restricting the use to a medical practice for people of the Coloured group. I consolidated the two stands and submitted my plans. I had envisaged increasing the services to be offered at the Reiger Park Medicentre: a general practice, a dispensing pharmacy, rooms for X-ray facilities, a room for laboratory specimens as well as a room for itinerant specialists like a gynaecologist, paediatrician, or physician. The plans were approved, and I started the reconstruction. I moved the practice to my double garage at home where I practised for four months. This made my GP life more hectic. I would be woken most evenings to provide emergency care. My social life was completely disrupted. If we wanted to have a breakaway on a weekend, somebody would show up seeking care,that would take the best part of an hour, while my family waited in the car, eager to escape the pressures of life. Such was the pressure of being a doctor that when my daughter, Angelique, matriculated, she opted to do a BCom degree at the University of Johannesburg.

The practice moved back to the newly renovated rooms with the expanded facilities: a GP practice, a pharmacy manned by my childhood friend Edward Hank, and an itinerant X-ray suite. The blood room was also established. Recruiting specialists proved to be unrewarding. I enticed a Coloured paediatrician for a short while, but he relocated to England to further his training.

The Reiger Park Catholic Church and St Anthony's had set up a drug rehabilitation centre under the House of Mercy. I was recruited to provide medical backup. I was still attached to the local AA and one evening during a meeting, Fr Stan Brennan and his executive committee barged in and demanded an audience. They wanted to take over and incorporate the Reiger Park AA services with St Anthony's activities. I argued hard that I was disappointed in the approach when what was required was co-operation to serve the community with the limited resources available. Fr Stan did not expect the fight back and stuttered that he was only trying to help. I was disgusted in 'the Church' and the methods adopted to take control of all social development under their supervision. The Reiger Park AA survived to fight another day. My relationship with Fr Stan, though, was shattered.

The social projects launched by the Alumni Society were running well and the members had gone into maintenance mode. Out in the greater society the mood was worsening. The ANC had over a hundred offices internationally campaigning for sanctions against the South African apartheid regime. Internally there was a cry to make the country ungovernable. The Save Boksburg Campaign, under the leadership of a young lawyer, Mahomed Navsa, attached to the Legal Resources Centre, wanted to test the mood, and staged a mock election at the St Phillips Anglican Church. The turnout was unexpectedly large; even survivors from World War II arrived, bedecked in their medals. Although the ANC was still banned, the party colours were flaunted. There was overwhelming support for the revolutionary movement. Surprisingly, there was no reaction from the Special Branch.

We were unaware of the negotiations that had been started with Nelson Mandela while he was still in Pollsmoor Prison, and later in Victor Verster Prison. Life in Reiger Park and in the rest of the country continued amid the chaos of an ungovernable state, with high expectations of the political role players being able to reach an agreement. In 1990, there was a foreboding in the air. So, on 2 February I took a portable radio to work to listen to the opening of Parliament by the State President, Mr FW de Klerk. I was glued to the airwaves, when he announced the unbanning of liberation movements and the release of Mandela. I could burst out of my skin. We were on the threshold of the slogan from my student days: 'Freedom in our lifetime…'

Sadly, my personal relationship at home had broken down, probably a result of my overzealous 'commitment' to social issues besides an irretrievable difference in value systems. It was a difficult time in my life. Coming from a broken home, it was an extremely painful decision to walk away from my two children. By this time there were relaxation in the enforcement of the Group Areas Act, so I bought a house in the suburb of Sunward Park. That first night driving past my old house I welled up and wept. I was alone in a big house that was spartanly furnished. It was not long before I was served with a divorce summons, delivered to my surgery with all the social implications thereof. Negotiations began and a settlement was reached, with the other painful issue limited access to my children. And so commenced a period of alternate weekend visits. I had to learn fast to cope with making those visits worthwhile and exciting without upsetting the routine too much. A pattern developed and it set in motion a different cadence in my life.

On the Sunday afternoon of 11 February 1990, when Mandela was released, we were at a friend's house, glued to the TV watching the process unfolding down in Cape Town. There was pandemonium in the streets of Reiger Park: youngsters were riding around in their cars with hooters blaring and people hugging in disbelief! Our time had come!

Then came the negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which

absorbed every free moment as I followed the intrigue of the negotiations until the first breakdown. We collectively held our breath. We were so close yet so far. The Boipatong massacre on 17 June 1992 illustrated the heavy stakes at play; and the AWB crashing through the entrance of the building where the negotiations were held were dreadful moments.

The negotiations resumed and an election date tentatively planned. In the meantime, my divorce was settled in court, unopposed. I was exhausted. I decided I needed some time out and planned a trip to Egypt to clear my head. So, on voting day, 27 April 1994, I found myself in Egypt, a tourist. I missed the voting back home and could not locate the embassy in Cairo to cast my first vote for the new South Africa. I returned to a South Africa engrossed in a different mood. I was greeted with courtesy and appropriate respect. Nelson Mandela's greatest victory: restoring the people's dignity!

I adapted to my bachelorhood, joined the Trinity Methodist Church in Sunward Park, adapted to my 'new' financial arrangements, maintaining my daughter and son at private schools, and tried to carve out a new life. Under those circumstances I was supported by a close-knit friendship circle from the Alumni Society, who would visit and provide social support.

In August of 1994 I got married to Brenda J Weimers. She was living in Dawn Park, not far from where Chris Hani was murdered.

Unfortunately for Brenda her house was burgled, and she moved out, pronto! Brenda and I took up our old relationship and decided to get married. As I was a divorcee our marriage was solemnised by Rev Hilton Vandayer in a restaurant setting, for close family members only. My brother Guy and Enid Veeraragaloo were our witnesses. As a splurge for the small group, I ordered Dom Pérignon, the last time I could afford it. Brenda and I left to spend our honeymoon at the Drakensberg Sun, a two-hour drive from our wedding venue. We reached the hotel at about two o'clock the next morning, having had a near miss with a truck parked next to the road. We survived and so has our marriage. We entered a new phase in our lives, but I lost the visits from my daughter Angelique; my son Anthony continued to visit. I did not object but maintained regular contact either personally or telephonically. I ensured that I remained a part of my children's lives.

One of the posters during the SBC boycott read: "Mandela the Freedom of Boksburg Awaits You." After his release the SBC decided to honour this promise. We faced a practical problem. The Freedom of a City is conferred by the municipality. In the end, after deliberating the matter, it was decided that the Boksburg Council was unrepresentative and therefore illegitimate and that we could go ahead and confer the honour. Mr Mandela agreed and so in 1991 Reiger Park/SBC became the first 'organisation' to confer the freedom of a town on him. That night the local civic hall, which normally accommodates about 1 000 people, was overflowing. One dared not lift your foot or you would lose your space! Madiba was glowing and highly appreciative. After the event we invited Madiba's entourage to the preschool complex where we entertained our future president, simply, with no pomp, but deeply appreciative of the sacrifice he made in the fight for our liberation.

Maturation Phase

1992-1997, Community development involvement

Post 1994 South Africa entered a difficult economic era. Fiscal policies were being adapted to provide for the entire population instead of prioritising the minority White group. Budgetary adjustments also had to be made to overcome the near bankrupt state. No significant new job creation took place. Instead, unemployment showed an upward trend. People started losing their jobs and the number of employed people with medical aid cover decreased from 30% to 20%. This showed in the practice numbers. When Dr Billy Jacobs left, I did not replace

him. He decided to leave the practice in preparation for specialisation. At this time my mother, Ma Soph as we started calling her, was also retrenched and to keep her occupied she became an 'unpaid supervisor' of the maintenance of the surgery complex. This provided a unique opportunity for the two of us. She would come and greet me on entering in the morning and 'report' before my day started. Those became treasured moments.

I took time out to attend a World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) conference in Hong Kong. Brenda joined me. This was my second international trip, combining learning and sightseeing. We also visited Macau and Guangzhou, which gave us an insight into Chinese living, both rural and urban. On our way home we stopped over in Thailand, Bangkok, to see first-hand the challenges of 'third-world' economies coping with population explosions and economic development. The local people were industrious and enjoyed their lives within the socio-economic parameters.

Back at home, Pappa Hiempie died in Queenstown. A violent altercation in the township led to his incarceration at the local jail. He died overnight and we were duly informed. On a previous visit, he made me commit to looking after him in his old age and giving him a proper burial. This provided a major dilemma. It was a nine-hour drive to Queenstown from Reiger Park. This called for a family meeting. We met: Ma Soph, Guy, Kenny and I. It was agreed that Guy and Kenny would drive down to Queenstown to fetch the body and have the body stored with Alpha Undertakers. The funeral arrangements were completed and Michael (Hiempie) Lentoor received a dignified burial.

Brenda and I settled into our joint lives. One of our much-loved past times was attending open air concerts, such as the pop orchestra performances in Roodepoort, "Music in the Park." In 1996 we both enrolled at Unisa. She pursued post-graduate teaching training and I enrolled for first year BCompt. That year I also managed to attend a follow-up conference of WONCA, this time in Dublin. I was completely taken in by the ancient city and centre of learning, old buildings with massive pictures of former teachers and a rich history of striving, conquest, and liberation.

As a treat for ourselves, at the end of the year Brenda booked tickets for us to attend a performance by Pavarotti in Stellenbosch. We boarded for the two-hour flight and arrived at Cape Town, just to be confronted by the reality of our lives. We were the only two Black faces in a crowd of Afrikaners, piercing eyes at the airport. We were huddled into a bus and driven to our hotel. On the bus we befriended the only guy that would talk to us. After a quiet evening, the next morning we got onto the bus again, this time en route to the venue. When we passed the Department of Religious Studies, our 'friend' called out: "Tony, look to the left, die engeltjie-fabriek," referring to the production of religious ministers for the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk (NG Kerk). Brenda and I were the only ones who found that funny. We arrived at the venue and were herded to our seats at the foot of Coetzenburg Mountain. Pavarotti's performance was excellent and worth the trip!

The Weimers family arranged for all of us to visit my brother-in-law, Donovan, in Windhoek in Namibia, at the end of 1996. A joyous visit was had by all, and we discovered that Brenda was expecting a baby, which added spice to a very intimate family holiday.

The year 1997 kicked off like most other years. We resumed our studies, and I continued in the practice. Halfway through the year we had a double shock: my son's best friend Heinrich Wangra was killed in a motor and bicycle collision, and Ma Soph took ill. Just a month before I had asked Ma Soph that if the worst happened, could we bury her on top of Hiempie? She exploded: "If you want me to get mad, keep on talking about that! Never!"

I had taken her for an X-ray of her chest, but it was clear. The accumulative effect of peripheral

artery disease with claudication following decades of diabetes and the lifelong smoking had taken its toll. On Saturday 7 June, the day of Heinrich's funeral service, I checked on her and then went to pay my last respects to my former teacher's son at a cremation memorial service at St Francis Catholic Church. On my way home I was stopped and told "something has happened at home" and that I needed to hurry there. On arrival the paramedics were already on hand. I respectfully introduced myself and requested that I assessed my mother's condition. Her pupils were fixed and dilated, and I declared that she had passed. The paramedics departed and the house filled with all my siblings. This was the first funeral in my core family. Hugs were exchanged, some in silence and others with loud bawling. I called my brother Guy aside and very perfunctorily said we need to go to the minister's house to arrange for the funeral. The minister listened to us and agreed to our plan of a weekday burial service. We returned to find my sisters had done what was necessary for the transfer of my mother's body to the Alpha Funeral Directors' parlour.

The week that follows a death is traditionally reserved for wakes and services performed by different church denominations. My mother's house, though, was very small and even the overflow tent poorly accommodated the people who came to honour and support the family. I decided to approach the minister to have a memorial service on the Wednesday following her death. He conceded. It was the first memorial service held, setting a new norm for the community. The church only had standing room remaining. The funeral was held, as was her request, on a Thursday, again a deviation from the norm, but the attendance was enormous. My colleagues from medical school, Terence, Michael, and their spouses came to honour her all the way from Cape Town and East London, respectively. Ma Soph had a dignified burial. She had belonged to what was called 'a society' (a group of women who contribute towards funerals and who took charge of the catering and arrangements at the service) and they fed the masses, who stayed on at the church to complete the funeral ritual. Out of personal and familial gratitude I went to each of these ladies to personally thank them for their role and supporting the family. This gesture was much appreciated.

I had applied for the post of Head of the Health Department at the Transitional Local Council of Boksburg. Interviews were held in November 1996. During December I was notified that I was the successful candidate, the first Black Medical Officer of Health for Boksburg, having worked part-time in public health since 1981. I assumed the position at the beginning of January 1997. It turned out that I was one of two Coloured people on the senior management team: the CEO was Mr Eddie Rankwana and I was the Director of Health. This was unusual as Coloured people were often only employed in lower-level posts.

Amy, my youngest daughter, was born on 7 August 1997, two months after the death of Ma Soph. It was a tumultuous year: change of job, death of a loved one and birth of a new baby. With so much happening, I sat for my exam in November and for the first time in my life I failed an end-of-year exam: Economics I, although my DP was more than 80%. Brenda and I had to adjust to being forty-year-olds with a new baby in the house. I attended her birth, by the same gynaecologist, Dr Rayman, that had delivered my two older children. It was a caesarean section and upon delivery Amy took a little while to take her first independent breath, to my consternation. Both parents being over forty and the child taking long to breathe left me extremely concerned. The concern, though, later proved to be unfounded. Christmas 1997 was spent at home adjusting to parenthood.

Raising Amy was quite a different experience. Brenda had difficulty adjusting to motherhood. Breastfeeding was a challenge, but she persevered

on my insistence, and to give Amy a good start. To protect her breasts from cancer, I had cut out a breast lump previously. The family had to practice what I preached. On one occasion the family was summoned to help when Amy cried uncontrollably. We got through it.

To celebrate her first birthday, Brenda arranged for all our friends and family to assemble at the 'Bokkiepark' in Parkdene. Poor Amy had fallen during the week and her face abraded, but this did not keep her from enjoying her birthday. The support from family and friends alike was super.

One winter morning Amy and I were walking around the pool when she slipped and fell into the pool. Consternation reigned. I grabbed her by her clothes almost instantaneously, but the cold and wet was just too much and she cried for the entire time I got her dry and changed her clothes. I decided not to inform Brenda immediately but that night I gently broached the subject, stressing the rescue effort. Brenda was not impressed!

Before long Amy turned four and was enrolled at the Freeway Park Pre-primary School. There we were, two forty-year-olds joining the young parents on open days and fundraising events. I had a good relationship with the principal, even donating a carport to cover the sandpit. By age six Amy was enrolled at St Dominic's Primary School, a Catholic facility with a completely different ambiance and schooling system. She excelled. She progressed from Grade 1 to Grade 6 with the annual change of teacher and she developed cognitively by leaps and bounds. She performed well academically and would later obtain her degree without failure.

Public Health Phase, Boksburg

Transitional Local Council

On my first day at the TLC of Boksburg I was welcomed by the Mayor of Boksburg, Cllr Eric Xayiya, and the CEO Mr E Rankwana. It was a hearty affair. I was the second-highest Black official, after Mr Rankwana, and I could feel the high expectations. My secretary, a young White lady, had gone to great lengths to ease me into my new job. We had met while I was doing part-time work for the department. We adapted to our new roles. She had been in the department for a long time and was a real asset as I familiarised myself with my new circumstances and responsibilities.

The Health Department had three sub-units: the Environmental Health division which traditionally dominated, the Personal Health unit which catered for nursing services and state health functions, and lastly a Coloured Housing division responsible for the administration of rental housing stock on behalf of the Provincial Housing Department. I realised that local government was the third tier of government regulated by legislation that was aimed at all three levels of government, so for the first month I engrossed myself in the legislation affecting the Health Department. It was crucial for success.

One of the key discoveries I made was in understanding delegation of power. Personal Health was a delegated function with a ring-fenced budget catering for three services: TB, nutrition, and immunisation, on behalf of the National Department of Health, initially delegated to the Gauteng Department of Health. It turned out that I had a dual reporting responsibility to the transitional local council (TLC) of Boksburg and the Gauteng Department of Health. The hospital services and private healthcare were not directly my responsibility. I inherited a service acutely concerned with industrial health and some social concerns via the Environmental Health section. The clinics, mostly located in the Black townships, were small and understaffed by a group of dedicated community health nurses concentrating on childhood immunisation and TB healthcare, with post-natal services on the decline.

The three-tier governmental system severely frustrated the expectations on the Health and Social Development Committee that was set up. I inherited a budget but had to start working on a budget for

the ensuing fiscal year. However, most items were determined at provincial level with adjustments for inflation. No new posts could be created unless approved at the Gauteng provincial level and this meant no extension of services in the foreseeable future.

President Mandela made funds available under the Kathorus Presidential Project, which were used to renovate the biggest clinic in Vosloorus and build a new clinic that was handed over to the province to replace the ageing facility. We could also renovate and upgrade a few other clinic buildings and we added new services like dentistry and incrementally curative services such as treatment for hypertension, diabetes, and the treatment for HIV/Aids. These changes also meant the introduction and coordination of expanded pharmaceutical services. The most important achievement was the integration of previously racially separated staff and clinic services. This applied to the Environmental Health division as well. I was the grateful and proud recipient of the Kathorus Special Presidential Project Award for administering the funds for the upgrades in 1999, personally signed by President Nelson R Mandela. The TLC of Boksburg only conferred the freedom of the city on President Mandela in 1997.

Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality

Consolidation of political mandate

The next big challenge happened in 2000 with the amalgamation and integration of former East Rand towns into the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. This was a major political exercise for the sake of equality of towns and utilising the benefits of scale. It took years to integrate towns and provide services across the metro with fairness and equality. This project is still ongoing.

Nine former town councils had to be dismantled and forged together in terms of political structures, but also to provide equitable services across a population of over three million people. The geopolitical realities of the apartheid state under the Group Areas Act, however, are difficult to dismantle. The Demarcation Board struggled with the pressure of developing new constituencies across former disparate suburbs and townships. Consequently, save for the upwardly mobile section of the community who moved into the so-called grey areas, the Black populace were economically trapped in the former townships, demanding both representation and services. Those trapped in these 'new' townships remained of low income and with poor socio-economic mobility, but with huge aspirations.

The post-transitional period at Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality was tumultuous. The integration of eleven former municipalities with competing and vested interests presented unique challenges. Low-growth budgets led to no expansion of services and the fair distribution of resources was extremely problematic, given the severe economic differences between Black and White citizens; the living conditions differed like night and day.

With the integration of administrative personnel, I was given a Directorship: Health Systems and Information. This was the basis for the continued double reporting to Council and Gauteng province, and increasingly to the National Health Department.

My most memorable event of my time at the TLC of Boksburg was a Council meeting when one of the items on the agenda was: "The Conference of the Freedom of Boksburg on Chris Hani, Posthumously." The Secretary introduced the item and silence fell. The mayor gave the Whip of the New National Party (NNP) the opportunity to address the House. Alderman Smith got up and opposed the motion because the freedom is only conferred on presidents. The member from the Conservative Party (CP) jumped up like a jack-in-a-box, supporting the NNP's views. The mayor, Cllr Xayiya, then called on the Whip of the ANC to speak. Councillor Mantashe, the Chief Whip,

got up very slowly and deliberately, bringing his hands together in front of his pot belly. He was extremely dramatic. He thanked the NNP for their contribution and explanation. But as for the CP, they killed the man. And then he sat down. A longer period of silence ensued, and then the item was passed by majority vote.

In September 2003, after months of preparations, ten of my friends and I climbed Kilimanjaro. As part of the preparation, we climbed mountains in the Malutis, Ukhahlamba and in Swaziland, the Malalotja range during winter. We set off for Tanzania and arrived in Kilimanjaro town. We slept at the Assembly Hotel and woke early the next morning to get onto the bus. All our luggage was piled onto the roof of the bus, in typical African style. We set off and halfway to the base of the mountain the bus got stuck in a rut along the road. We all had to disembark and push the bus. We were not deterred and eventually reached the base of the mountain on the subtropical fringe. Our group of eleven was supplemented by a young man, an American named Seth, to complete our quota. A tour leader was appointed and under his guidance we set off for day one. Halfway up we heard thumping footsteps and singing. As the noises got closer, we realised it was a corpse being carried down by the local porters. It was a wake-up call, a realisation that this was no walk in the park. One of our team members got close to returning to base camp. He persevered and by late afternoon we reached the first camp. The guides had already reached the camp and prepared a delicious supper of soup and chicken curry. The next morning, we woke up with our tents frozen stiff. The height above sea level led to a drop in the ambient temperature. We soldiered on; four days of up and down, acclimatising to the altitude and low oxygen levels. On day four, nine from our group summited. I proudly displayed the new SA flag and immortalised it in a picture at -20 °C. Our two-day descent went much quicker, although we were exhausted. We arrived back at the hotel and forgot about health precautions to indulge in victory drinks with ice cubes made from local tap water. After a restful sleep most of us woke up to severe diarrhoea, the victory folly!

The visit to the Serengeti and Ngorongoro crater was fantastic, bar the bursts to the loo for relief from traveller's diarrhoea. We set off for Zanzibar for some rest and recovery. Brenda and I both celebrated our fiftieth birthday at a luncheon sponsored by us, to the delight of our group. It was the cherry on top for a mission accomplished. The stay in Stonetown reminded us of the evils of greed, slavery, and religious intolerance, amid the smell of exotic spices.

This feat did not go unnoticed. At the next Council meeting an announcement was made that I was the first official, probably out of our entire group from Ekurhuleni to summit Kilimanjaro. It was a great acknowledgement.

In the year 2000, after returning from the Namibian coast – seeing the sunset on the old millennium and surviving the doomsday fears of Y2K, I went to a conference in Durban. While in Durban, during my time off, I approached an estate agent to take me around to look at property in the Kloof area. I eventually settled for a vacant stand that I could pay off and develop at my leisure. I have always had a penchant for retiring in Durban. KwaZulu-Natal is a 'warm place', as the advert goes. By 2002 the stand was paid off and development commenced. I engaged the architectural services of Mr Len Rosenberg, a former resident at Alan Taylor Residence, one of the few non-medical students. The collaboration with a professional originally from Eersterust turned out to be rewarding. He was working as the architect responsible for buildings at the newly established Durban University of Technology, which provided access to ancillary services. Construction commenced in February 2002 and was finished by September. I arranged to use my accumulated leave to make fortnightly site

visits, leaving on a Friday at 05:00 and returning on Sunday. These early morning drives were special; I would switch to my favourite radio station and enjoy the early morning songs and compilations while driving on the N3 towards Durban. By the time I reached Villiers in the Free State, the day would break in the east, while the west was still in darkness. It was a very awe-inspiring sight, seeing the darkness separated from the light. I would reach Kloof by 11:00, in time for the site meeting that lasted up to two hours. Over the weekend I would stay over and spend time with my dear friend Filip Teise and his family on Treasure Beach. His house had a 180-degree frontal sea view. On one such trip I took my youngest daughter Amy along, who was just five years at the time, and we stayed with Mrs Enid Fourie in Merewent.

On completion of the building, I rented the property to give myself time to complete my envisaged time at Ekurhuleni. I had decided to opt out at age fifty-five in 2008 to access my tax-free lump sum pension to pay off outstanding debts.

Members of the East Rand Alumni Society and the Save Boksburg Committee went on to occupy high-level posts in the new South Africa due to their knowledge and skills. Others became successful businesspersons. In the previous regime this would not have been possible. These individuals included Mahomed Navsa, who was the face of the SBC, Cecil Morden, Henry (Bok) Jeffreys, Brenda Weimers, Norma Page, Jeanette du Preez, Billy Jacobs, Yvette Nicol, Yolande Nicol, Rocky Skeef, Kevin Ehrenreich and Keith du Preez, who untimely succumbed to Covid-19 in early 2021. These names are but a few.

With the dawning of the new South Africa, the upwardly mobile in the township community could escape the indignity and repressive Group Areas into the former White suburbs, turning a lot of them into 'grey areas.' The paramount reason for moving out was to expose their children to better opportunities in education and more cultural activities. This became an interesting phenomenon. Black children were seeking better education in former Coloured areas, while Coloured children commuted to former Model C schools. Universities also opened their doors more readily, both traditionally English and Afrikaans. Those with the necessary education and training started filling senior posts and became part of a rapidly growing middle class. Alas, those without the required education and training started feeling the disappointment of open competition without 'job reservation' and were increasingly becoming part of the growing number of unemployed people.

I had enrolled concurrently at Unisa for a BCompt and an MPH. In 2006, after ten years, I graduated with the BCompt but decided not to do articles because of the salary sacrifice. The exposure and content, though, stood me in good stead with my managerial responsibilities. By 2007 I started writing my dissertation towards my Master of Public Health (MPH) at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The dissertation was approved, and I graduated in 2009 with the graduation ceremony taking place in Durban on 2 October 2009.

During 2008 as I was preparing to retire from the City of Ekurhuleni, we packed up after fifteen years in Sunward Park and moved to Kloof in KwaZulu-Natal.

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Return to KwaZulu-Natal

My son Anthony and I left after Christmas 2008, as an advance party to prepare for the rest of the family, who were staying with my mother-in-law, Ma-Weimers, to follow. By the time Anthony and I arrived, our furniture was delivered so it was just unpacking and placing the furniture in the correct rooms. We also attempted to start the landscaping by cutting down alien trees. In the heat of December this proved to be an extremely challenging task, so soon Anthony wandered off to visit his university friends in dad's car.

On 2 January 2009 the family arrived: Brenda and Amy, Ma-Weimers, my brother-in-law Gavin, and my sister-in-law Cathy. With the house full of people, the house took on a different ambience. The following day Gavin and I moved some large flowerpots in place and by evening we sat down to a hearty family dinner in the festive spirit. We had just retired to the TV room to enjoy the movie *Oh Schucks it's Schuster* when the home was invaded by three armed men. The first culprit standing in the doorway dared to say: "This is not a joke" with his outstretched hands clutching a firearm. They started cajoling us into the bathroom, but by this time the entire family was praying aloud. It sounded like a beehive. This was unnerving for the invaders eager to subdue the family. One of them smashed the glass on the coffee table with the butt of his gun. This did not deter my feisty mother-in-law, so he clouted her.

Then they wanted to get the keys for my wife's BMW. They had found her credit card and called out her name wanting the PIN. Brenda was dazed and confused and could not remember the PIN. They locked us up in the bathroom and proceeded to make a getaway with their loot in Brenda's car. Our second evening together as a family in our new home and we had to pay "*vul' umlomo*", a Zulu negotiation practice of paying to be able to proceed with negotiations. We assessed the extent of the items stolen and headed for the local police station to make a case and, importantly, to get a case number for insurance claims. The claims for Gavin and Cathy were honoured. Because of the move my

Brenda, me and Amy in Durban (Andrews collection).

claim was rejected as the insured location was not the same as the site of the loss. A double whammy! What an introduction to my retirement future.

I suffered my first blue eye in fifty-five years, but that was not as bad as my psychological trauma. I set up a visit to the psychiatrist for counselling and debriefing. I was booked off for a month to recover from my physical and psychological trauma. It was the longest I was ever booked off during my entire career. I spent the time supporting my family. We also had to get Amy enrolled at her new school: St Mary's Diocesan School in Kloof to commence Grade 7.

At the end of January, I returned to Boksburg. At work I gave notice that I would be retiring at the end of February 2009. I stayed with my mother-in-law Ma-Weimers for the whole of February being spoiled and treated like a king. At work I was given a formal send-off and all ties were severed with the City of Ekurhuleni. It was a strange feeling, listening to speech after speech that all sounded like obituaries. On 1 March 2009 I bought a dog, a Jack Russell terrier, to honour a promise I had made to Amy.

We, Ma-Weimers and I, put the dog in a plastic basket, covered it with an old worn-out washing board with a hole in the centre and took to the N3 en route to KZN. We stopped at Van Reenen's Pass to attend to our ablutions. Refreshed, we hit the road again and arrived in Kloof to start a new life. Arriving home the excitement centred on the new addition to the family, the dog. He was promptly named Toby. I think just close enough to my name, Tony, to create confusion …

It's a dog's life!

Notes

Chapter 1

1 See Chapter 8, "What is in a name? Being Coloured in South Africa".
2 *The East Rand Express*, 19 September 1908.
3 *The East Rand Express*, 22 May 1909.
4 DJ Potgieter, (ed). 1970. *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa volume 2 (BAC-CAL)*. Cape Town: Nasionale Boekhandel.
5 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 31 August 1962.
6 Boksburg 82 Trade Fair. 1982. *The Building of a Boom Town.* Johannesburg: Pithead Press.
7 F. Stark, (ed). 1957. *Seventy Years of Achievement, Boksburg, 1887-1957*. Self-published.
8 [Boksburg Town Council]. n.d. *Boksburg 1903-4–1978-79: 75 Jaar van Munisipale Bestuur. 75 Years of Municipal Government*. n.p.: n.p. It is noteworthy that this source made no reference to the number of Indians.
9 I remember as a youngster that mine workers staying at these two compounds visited each other over weekends creating a steady stream of people walking along Drommedaris Street, which, apart from a stretch of field, virtually 'connected' these two mine compounds.
10 Bokamoso Landscape Architects and Environmental Consultants CC. 2017. April 2017. Draft EIA Report for the Proposed Parkdene X7 Mixed Use Development. Ref: Gaut: 002/16-17/0217. Pretoria.
11 Bokamoso Landscape Architects and Environmental Consultants CC.
12 Bokamoso Landscape Architects and Environmental Consultants CC.
13 *The East Rand Express,* 24 March 1906.
14 *The East Rand Express,* 25 March 1905.
15 *The East Rand Express,* 2 May 1906.
16 *The East Rand Express,* 29 June 1907.
17 "It is notorious that the scarcity and dearness of native labour has been felt ever since the (Anglo Boer) war, not only by the mines which recruit through the (Witwatersrand Native Labour) Association, but those which do not, and by many other employers who recruit through private agencies." Transvaal Chamber of Mines, 1906. *The East Rand Express,* 19 December 1906.
18 *The East Rand Express.* 1907. "Transplanting A Nation. From German West Africa to the Transvaal. A Masterly Measure to provide unskilled labour for the mines." 13 July, p. 24.
19 "Indian South Africans." 2010. *South African History Online.* https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/indian-south-africans.
20 ArcGIS StoryMaps. 2019. "The History of Indians in South Africa." www.arcgis.com. https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=90e742c53d484ea88a177bdb07ac5ea7.
21 *The East Rand Express,* 6 February 1904.
22 *The East Rand Express,* 4 February 1905.
23 *The East Rand Express,* 8 November 1905.
24 *The East Rand Express,* 21 October 1911.
25 *The East Rand Express,* 8 November 1905.
26 *The East Rand Express,* 5 September 1903.
27 *The East Rand Express,* 17 October 1903.
28 The Klippoortjie Estates and Tramway Company Ltd. were the freeholders and Hercules Company Ltd. was the claimholders.

29 The farm Klippoortjie No. 149.
30 During subsequent negotiations it was agreed to divert the road between Boksburg and Elsburg further east, so that no portion of the road shall be nearer than 150 yards from the proposed site. This could be done without much difficulty as "the present road was merely a track across the veld". *The East Rand Express*, 1 August 1906.
31 *The East Rand Express*, 27 May 1905.
32 *The East Rand Express*, 21 July 1906.
33 *The East Rand Express*, 25 August 1906.
34 At a meeting in November 1908 the Boksburg Town Council resolved: "(a) That in accordance with section 3 of the Native Location By-Laws, the 31st December 1908, be fixed as the date from and after which every Native dwelling or remaining within the limits of the municipality, with the exception of such Natives being domestic or household or mine servants as may reside on the premises of their European employers, shall be required to reside in the location." *The East Rand Express*, 21 November 1908.
35 "There is no reason why the new location should not be run as well as the Germiston location under Mr Weinthal." *The East Rand Express*, 29 August 1908.
36 *The East Rand Express*, 30 January 1909.
37 *The East Rand Express*, 24 April 1909.
38 *The East Rand Express*, 6, 13 and 20 February 1909.
39 This judgment was upheld on appeal. *The Eastern Express*, 27 March 1909. Wikipedia notes that "Most workers (black and coloured) initially resided in the Boksburg North area but another area was later established dubbed, Julewe. Julewe was divided in two by the main road, Church Road, running through it, with black workers on the one side, and coloureds, who moved to the Transvaal from the Eastern Cape, on the other." This area seems to be a reference to the old Native location in Boksburg. "Boksburg." 2021. *Wikipedia*. 28 February. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boksburg.
40 *The East Rand Express*, 22 May 1909.
41 *The East Rand Express*, 19 March 1910.
42 *The East Rand Express*, 11 June 1910.
43 *The East Rand Express*, 28 July 1923.
44 [Boksburg Town Council]. n.d. *The First Hundred Years, Boksburg 1887 to 1987*. n.p: n.p. https://sahistory.net/documents/boksburg-the-first-hundred-years/.
45 The Boksburg Town Council proposed to move the Asiatic Bazaar to the south of the town. The objection was that the proximity of the location to Vogelfontein depreciated the value of the stands in that suburb.
The East Rand Express, 14 November 1903.
46 *The East Rand Express*, 30 July 1921.
47 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 25 February 1949.
48 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, March 1949.
49 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, April 1949.
50 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 17 June 1949.
51 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 21 October 1949.
52 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 2 December 1949.
53 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 22 August 1958.
54 See Christopher quoted in Padraig O' Malley: "This act 'was applied for demolition of various inner but dilapidated suburbs . . . The displaced Black populations were largely rehoused in segregated mono-racial municipal housing estates on the urban periphery'. . . Thus, by proclaiming certain non-White areas as 'slums', these areas could be condemned, and people moved with overtly 'non-racial' motives." "1934. Slums Act." The Heart of Hope: The O'Malley Archives. n.d. Omalley.nelsonmandela.org. Accessed October 4, 2022. https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01646/05lv01782.htm.
55 Application of the Slums Act of 1934 is shown to have significantly eroded residential opportunities of Black people in Johannesburg. Three case studies of suburbs where extensive removals were implemented highlight the diverse mechanisms of urban segregation under slum provisions. The pre-apartheid importance of the Slums Act in securing commercial expansion, controlling the location of Coloured and Indian housing, and entrenching separate residential areas for poor whites is identified. Susan Parnell. 1988. "Racial Segregation in Johannesburg." *South African Geographical Journal* 70 (2): 112–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/03736245.1988.10559763.
56 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien, 2001. 'The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance.' DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 74.
57 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 5 May 1965.
58 To paraphrase Mr Leon Ferreira, a clerk of the Boksburg Town Council and Administrator of Reiger Park: "The Coloured people haven't had a place in the sun for a long time, I will do my best to give it to them." Quoted in the *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 28 August 1970.
59 *The East Rand Express*, 4 February 1905.
60 *The East Rand Express*, 27 May 1922.
61 *The East Rand Express*, 24 June 1922. The last sentence of the last paragraph was point "c" of eight points noted, "a" to "h".
62 *The East Rand Express*, 5 August 1992.
63 *The East Rand Express*, 19 August 1922.
64 *The East Rand Express*, 26 August 1922. See reference to the letter in *The Star* of 18 July 1922.
65 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 20 May 1966.
66 See Davenport quoted in Padraig O' Malley: "This 'provided positive incentives in the form of tax holidays, tariff rebates and the prospect of cheaper labour to entice industrialists to move, together with negative constraints such as a ban on the enlargement of black labour forces if they elected to remain in the existing areas of industrial concentration.'" Padraig O' Malley. "1967. Physical Planning & Utilization of Resources Act No 88." *The Heart of Hope: The O'Malley Archives*. n.d. Omalley.nelsonmandela.org. Accessed October 4, 2022. https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv01829/06lv01928.htm.
67 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 4 October 1968.

Chapter 2

1 Keith Gardiner (ed.). 2013. *Benoni: A Golden Anniversary for a Golden City*. "Benoni Golden Anniversary." n.d. Fdocuments.net. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://fdocuments.net/document/benoni-golden-anniversary.html?page=1, pp. 15, 28, 32, 34, 35, 40, 42, 51, 61 and 66.
2 Gardiner, pp. 61, 87.
3 *The East Rand Express,* 8 September 1923.
4 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 November 1967.
5 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien. 2001. "The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance." DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 42-43. My grandfather worked at the Modder B mine. Following the closure of the mine my father and his family stayed in Syrian Town, for a brief period during the early 1950s, before they moved to the location in Germiston, Dukathole.
6 George, Alagiah. 2001. *A Passage to Africa*. London: Little, Brown and Company, pp. 39-40.
7 "Vic Toweel." 2022. *Wikipedia,* 22 May. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vic_Toweel.
8 "Lebanese People in South Africa." 2022. Wikipedia. July 8, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanese_people_in_South_Africa.
9 Nieftagodien, p. 282.
10 Nieftagodien, pp. 285-91.
11 Nieftagodien, pp. 298-99.
12 Nieftagodien, p. 299.
13 Nieftagodien, p. 305.
14 Nieftagodien, pp. 303-05.
15 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 5 June 1953.
16 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 12 April 1946.
17 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* April 1946.
18 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 11 February 1955.
19 JJ O'Connor & EF Robertson. 2019. "Ismail Jacobus Mohamed - Biography." Maths History. Accessed October 4, 2022. https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Mohamed/.
20 Roseinnes Phahle. 2019. "Notes on Letters from a Kindred Spirit: Ismail Mohamed." *South African History Online.* www.sahistory.org.za. Accessed October 4, 2022. https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/notes-letters-kindred-spirit-ismail-mohamed-roseinnes-phahle-august-2019.
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23 Gomolemo Mokae. "Like father, like son." *Daily News,* 21 September 1999, p. 17.
24 Al J. Venter. 1974. *Coloured, A profile of two million South Africans*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, pp. 373-80.
25 The *East Rand Express,* 26 November 1910.
26 The *East Rand Express,* 26 November 1910.
27 The *East Rand Express,* 31 December 1910.
28 The *East Rand Express,* 7 October 1911.
29 The *East Rand Express,* 15 April 1911.
30 *The East Rand Express,* 7 October 1911.
31 *The East Rand Express,* 15 December 1923.
32 *New Age*. 23 February 1961. Also see "Research Archives, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa - WITS." n.d. Historicalpapers-Atom.wits.ac.za. Accessed October 4, 2022. http://www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/inventories/inv_pdfo/AD1715/AD1715-5-24-1-001-jpeg.pdf.
33 *New Age*, 23 February 1961
34 Nieftagodien, p. 34.
35 "Springs." 2021. South African History Online. https://www.sahistory.org.za/place/springs; "Gauteng Happenings." n.d. www.gautenghappenings.co.za. Accessed October 4, 2022. http://www.gautenghappenings.co.za/index.htm.
36 *The East Rand Express,* 29 May 1920.
37 *The East Rand Express,* 13 January 1923.
38 Nieftagodien, p. 33.
39 Nieftagodien, pp. 128-31.
40 Gardiner, p. 18.
41 Marc Shoul. 2012. "Panos Pictures - Stories - Brakpan." Accessed October 4, 2022. https://library.panos.co.uk/features/stories/brakpan.html#0_00167316; Pongrass Import. 2019. "Brakpan 100: History of Old Brakpan Location." *Brakpan Herald*. 6 September. https://brakpanherald.co.za/198045/history-of-old-brakpan-location; The Britannica. Editors of Encyclopaedia. 2008. „Brakpan." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 15 February. https://www.britannica.com/place/Brakpan.
42 "Nigel Business Directory. n.d. "History of Nigel." www.nigel.co.za. Accessed October 4, 2022. http://www.nigel.co.za/history.htm.
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Chapter 3

1 Harold Macmillan, Speech to the South African Parliament, Cape Town. 3 February 1960. Available at: https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/wind-change-speech.
2 George Bizos, 2017. *65 Years of Friendship, A memoir of my friendship with Nelson Mandela*. Cape Town: Umuzi, p.24.
3 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien, 2001. 'The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance.' DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 22.
4 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* November 1946.
5 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 August 1948.
6 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, March 1949.
7 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, June 1953.
8 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, June 1953.
9 Nieftagodien, pp. 34-35.
10 Nieftagodien, p. 80.

11 Nieftagodien, pp. 80-91.
12 Nieftagodien, pp. 152-65.
13 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 18 March, 15 April 1955.
14 Nieftagodien, p. 85.
15 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 2 October 1959.
16 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 28 August 1959.
17 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 28 August 1959.
18 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 2 October 1959.
19 The agreement consists of a letter from Mr EM Gorges, Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, to Mr MK Gandhi on behalf of the Minister of the Interior, General JC Smuts, and the reply of Mr Gandhi. Both letters are dated 30 June 1914. In his response Mr Gandhi wrote: "The passing of the Indians' Relief Bill and this correspondence finally closes the *passive resistance struggle which commenced in the September of 1906* and which to the Indian community cost much physical suffering and pecuniary loss and the Government much anxious thought and consideration. . . As the Minister is aware, some of my countrymen have wished me to go further. They are dissatisfied that the trade licences laws of the different provinces, the Transvaal Gold Law, the Transvaal Townships Act, the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885 have not been altered, so as to give them full rights of residence, trade and ownership of land. . . . Complete satisfaction cannot be expected until full civic rights have been conceded to the resident Indian population." (The Danish Peace Academy, "The Smuts-Gandhi Agreement, June 30, 1914", http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/sydafrika.htm, emphasis added). Gandhi arrived in Natal in April 1893. He helped found the Natal Indian Congress on 22 August 1894 and settled in Johannesburg in 1907. He left South Africa for England in July 1914 and England for India in January 1915. He spent a total of 21 years in South Africa.
20 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 9 October 1959.
21 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 24 February 1961.
22 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 3 March 1961.
23 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 31 March 1961.
24 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 14 April 1961.
25 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 22 September 1961.
26 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 3 November 1961.
27 Nieftagodien, p. 315.
28 "When Indians first settled in Boksburg in 1885 many of them began working as labourers in the coal mines, which they continued to do into the 1960s. Others worked in the service industry. The Indian community of Boksburg therefore had a much bigger proportion of workers in their ranks compared to their counterparts in Benoni and Springs" (Nieftagodien, p. 317).
29 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 10 November 1961.
30 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 17 November 1961.
31 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 1 December 1961.
32 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 6 August 1954.
33 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 1 May 1959.
34 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, 20 October 1961.
35 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad*, July 1958.

Chapter 4

1 This issue of the newspaper reported the number of residential stands to be 268. *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 22 February 1963.
2 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 26 January 1962.
3 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 and 24 August 1962.
4 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 7 and 14 September 1962.
5 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 and 23 November 1962.
6 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 and 23 November 1962.
7 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 and 23 November 1962.
8 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 1 and 29 November 1963.
9 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 6 and 20 March 1964.
10 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 24 April, 1964.
11 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 24 April 1964.
12 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 15 May 1964.
13 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 15 May 1964.
14 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 29 May 1964.
15 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 August 1964.
16 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien. 2001. 'The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance.' DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 170.
17 Nieftagodien, p. 320.
18 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 30 October 1964.
19 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 30 October 1964.
20 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 7 December 1962.
21 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 31 August 1962.
22 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 September 1948.
23 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* August 1951.
24 In terms of an Influx Control Proclamation, No. 212 of 1946 issued in terms of the Natives (Urban Areas) Act. *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 December 1951.
25 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 15 April 1955.
26 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* July 1955.
27 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 14 October 1955.
28 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 2 December 1955.
29 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 14 October 1955.
30 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 8 June 1956.
31 Personal communication from Ms Susan Dowd, Ekurhuleni Municipality, 4 February 2021.
32 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 March 19633 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 April 1965.
34 Personal communication from Ms Susan Dowd, Ekurhuleni Municipality, 4 February 2021.
35 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 19 May and 9 June 1967.
36 Zaid Khumalo, "Tracing the origins of Vosloorus on its 54th anniversary." *Kathorus Mail.* 3 October 2016. https://kathorusmail.co.za/14087/tracing-the-origins-of-vosloorus-on-its-54th-anniversary/.

37 Personal communication from Ms Susan Dowd, Ekurhuleni Municipality, 4 February 2021.

Chapter 5

1 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien. 2001. 'The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance.' DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, p. 335.
2 Nieftagodien, p. 336.
3 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 8 January 1965.
4 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 2 April 1965.
5 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 5 February 1965.
6 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 30 April 1965.
7 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 7 May 1965.
8 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 30 July 1965.
9 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 May and 6 August 1965.
10 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 August 1965.
11 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 August 1965.
12 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 9 June 1967.
13 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 1 March 1968.
14 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 25 December 1970.
15 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 5 January 1968.
16 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 November 1967.
17 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 April 1970.
18 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 19 July 1968.
19 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 26 December 1969.
20 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 23 August 1968.
21 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 13 March 1970.
22 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 31 January 1969.
23 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 5 April 1968.
24 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 November 1967.
25 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 3 February 1967.
26 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 6 September 1968.
27 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 29 March 1968.
28 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 20 December 1968.
29 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 May 1965.
30 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 September 1965.
31 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 26 May 1967.
32 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 November 1967.
33 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 April 1972.
34 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 18 and 25 June 1965.
35 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 1 April 1966.
36 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 25 March and 1 April 1966.
37 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 13 May and 3 June 1966.
38 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 June 1966.
39 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 June 1968.
40 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 12 July 1968.
41 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 November 1967.
42 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 26 April 1967.
43 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 2 June 1967.
44 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 4 August 1967.
45 A term 'uncontrolled' appears to be no longer in use, i.e. referring to a delinquent child or a child who repeatedly or habitually disobeys the direction of his/her lawful parents, guardians, or legal custodians. The law provided that such a child may be placed in a place of safety.
46 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 May 1966.
47 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 19 May 1967.
48 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 March 1969.
49 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 30 October 1970.
50 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 11 December 1970.
51 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 13 May 1966.
52 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 23 June and 22 September 1967.
53 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 June 1968.
54 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 6 October 1967.
55 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 October 1966.
56 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 February 1969.
57 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 21 April 1972.
58 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 8 March 1968.
59 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 1 September 1972.
60 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 October 1969.
61 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 26 December 1969.
62 "Boksburg." 2021. *Wikipedia.* February 28, 2021. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boksburg.
63 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 5 March 1965.
64 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 23 April 1965.
65 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 12 March 1965.
66 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 19 March 1965.
67 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 23 April 1965.
68 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 18 June 1965.
69 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 6 August 1965.
70 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 14 January 1966.
71 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 September 1966.
72 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 13 February 1970.
73 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 15 March 1968.
74 Nieftagodien, p. 336.
75 Nieftagodien, pp. 334-35.
76 Nieftagodien, p. 335.
77 RE van der Ross. 1979. *Myths and Attitudes. An Inside Look at the Coloured People*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, pp. 12-13.
78 Zaid Khumalo, "Tracing the origins of Vosloorus on its 54th anniversary." *Kathorus Mail,* 3 October 2016. https://kathorusmail.co.za/14087/tracing-the-origins-of-vosloorus-on-its-54th-anniversary/.
79 As quoted in George, Bizos. 2017. *65 Years of Friendship, A Memoir of My Friendship with Nelson Mandela*. Cape Town: Umuzi, p. 225, emphasis added.

Chapter 6

1 George Alagiah. 2001. *A Passage to Africa*. London: Little, Brown and Company, p. 12.
2 *East Rand Express,* 25 March 1911.
3 *East Rand Express,* 26 November 1910.
4 *East Rand Express,* 14 January 1922.
5 *East Rand Express,* 7 January 1922.

6 *East Rand Express,* 18 March 1922.
7 Keith Gardiner (ed.). 2013. *Benoni: A Golden Anniversary for a Golden City*. "Benoni Golden Anniversary - [PDF Document]." n.d. Fdocuments.net. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://fdocuments.net/document/benoni-golden-anniversary.html?page=1, pp. 64-65.
8 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 29 April 1955.
9 "Boksburg." n.d. Wikiwand. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Boksburg.
10 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 10 September 1965.
11 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 22 August 1952.
12 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 22 July 1955.
13 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 3 August 1956.
14 Alagiah, p. 260.
15 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 May 1966.
16 Alagiah, p. 242.
17 Eugene Baron and Nico Adam Botha. 2020. *Obedience and Servant Leadership*. Bloemfontein: Sun Media, pp. 234-35.
18 See an interesting reflection on the aftermath of the Anglo Boer War in: "Mocking Memories – Anglo Boer War." *East Rand Express*, Vol. XXXV. No. 27, July 3, 1920. Letter by (the) Sons and Daughters of South Africa and the editor's appeal for reconciliation between the Dutch and the English South Africans.
19 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 9 September 1966.
20 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 September 1966.
21 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 16 September 1966.
22 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien. 2001. "The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance." DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, pp. 325-27.
23 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 31 January 1969.
24 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 28 August 1970.
25 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 27 June 1969.
26 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 17 October 1969.
27 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 31 July 1970.
28 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 4 December 1970.
29 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 11 December 1970.
30 The Coloured Persons Representative Council (CRC) of the Republic of South Africa was a partially elected council with limited legislative powers, intended to represent Coloured South Africans. It was first elected in 1969, re-elected in 1975, and permanently dissolved in 1980. In 1984 the House of Representatives was created to represent Coloured voters in the Tricameral Parliament. "Coloured Persons Representative Council." 2022. *Wikipedia*. April 27, 2022. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coloured_Persons_Representative_Council.
31 Nieftagodien, pp. 336-49; Nieftagodien interviewed Mr Rabie in Boksburg on 10 November 2000.
32 In the 1969 elections for the CRC in Reiger Park (and surrounding) Mr Rabie received 2 418 votes against the 2 235 for Mr September. The Labour Party could only muster 1 165 votes. In the 1975 elections for the CRC the Federal Party's majorities were reduced everywhere except in Reiger Park where Mr Rabie increased his majority thanks to the absence of the NCPP whose candidate (Mr September) nearly defeated him in 1969. David Yoram Saks. 1991. "The Failure of The Coloured Persons' Representative Council and its Constitutional Repercussions, 1956-1985." MA thesis, Rhodes University, pp.132, 244.
33 Nieftagodien, pp. 336-49.
34 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 24 March 1972.
35 Anna Louw. "Troubled Ex-NP Cabinet Minister Rabie Dies." *The Star.* 1 May 2008. www.security.co.za. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://www.security.co.za/news/7714.

Chapter 7

1 This should read Gangadin.
2 Alpha is one of the first funeral homes in Reiger Park.
3 *Sunday Times Extra*, 17 May 1981.
4 *Ekstra-Rapport*, 17 May 1981.
5 *Ekstra-Rapport*, 17 May 1981.
6 My recollection is that the Gangadins were the only Indian taxi owners in Reiger Park at the time.
7 *Sunday Times Extra*, 17 May 1981.
8 Management Committee (Town Council of Boksburg). 14 November 1988. Second November Meeting (meeting minutes). Ekurhuleni Archives, Germiston. Accessed on Tuesday, 2 March 2021.
9 East Rand Alumni Society. 24 June 1989. "Presidential Report by Dr Billy Jacobs". In Annual General Meeting (meeting minutes).
10 Management Committee (Town Council of Boksburg). 9 December 1988. Special Meeting (meeting minutes). Ekurhuleni Archives, Germiston. Accessed on Tuesday, 2 March 2021.
11 Management Committee (Town Council of Boksburg). 26 January 1989. Special Meeting (meeting minutes). Ekurhuleni Archives, Germiston. Accessed on Tuesday, 2 March 2021.
12 Town Council of Boksburg. 30 March 1990. "Signed letter". In the 1 055th ordinary meeting of the Town Council of Boksburg (meeting minutes).
13 *Save/Red Boksburg*. c. March 1989. Newsletter.
14 ITV News. "SA Consumer Boycott in Boksburg (Dec 1988)." n.d. www.youtube.com. https://youtu.be/1j3k-_Vy5Hg.
15 H Mashabela and M Narsoo. 1989. *The Boksburg Boycott*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.
16 Those interviewed included Mr Mahomed Navsa, chairman of the Save Boksburg Committee (SBC), an alliance between 12 Reiger Park community groups and the Reiger Park Management Committee, which has led the protest action in the township; Mr Buchanan Jantjies, chairman of the Reiger Park Management Committee; Mr Jac Rabie leader of the United Democratic Party (UDP); Mr Henry Jeffreys, secretary of the SBC; Mr Alfred Woodington, a trade unionist and SBC member; Mr Clyde Louw, a businessman of Reiger Park; Mr Sidwell Mofokeng, chairman of the management committee of the Vosloorus Council, a black local authority; Mr Justice Radebe, chairman of the

Vosloorus Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr Zoli Kunene, an executive member of the Vosloorus Chamber and Industry; Mr Johan Viljoen chairman of the Boksburg Chamber of Commerce and Industries (BCCI) and also chairman of the Boksburg Alliance, which brought together organised (white) businesses in the town and other interest groups to oppose the council's actions; Mr Issy Kramer of the Boksburg Alliance and an opposition town councillor; Mrs Leona Farrar, president of the Germiston Chamber of Commerce and Industries; and Mr Pieter Grobler, president of the Benoni Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

17 Mashabela and Narsoo, p. 7.
18 Mashabela and Narsoo, p. 9.
19 Mashabela and Narsoo, p. 21.
20 Mashabela and Narsoo, p. 11.
21 Mashabela and Narsoo, p. 18.
22 *The Star,* 11 November 1989; 30 October 1989.
23 *The Citizen*, 4 April 1989, 26 May 1989, 10 July 1989; *Business Day,* 17 November 1989; *The Citizen*, 17 November 1989.
24 *Los Angeles Times*, 11 December 1988.
25 *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December 1988 and *Orlando Sentinel*, 26 November 1988.
26 *Chicago Tribune,* 2 December 1988.
27 *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December 1988.
28 *Chicago Tribune*, 2 December 1988.
29 *The Christian Science Monitor*, 19 December 1988.
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33 *The New York Times*, 24 November 1989.
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35 *The New York Times*, 19 September 1993.
36 Simon Zadek, Simon, Sanjiv Lingayah and Sara Murphy. 1998. *Consumer Works! Civil Action for Human Development.* Human Development Occasional Papers (1992-2007) HDOCPA-1998-22, Human Development Report Office, United Nations Development Programme, p. 19.
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38 See wording of this decision under the discussion on Informal Settlements below.
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42 Marutlulle, pp. 2-5.
43 Town Council of Boksburg. 30 March 1990. The 1055th Ordinary Meeting of the Town Council of Boksburg (meeting minutes). Ekurhuleni Archives, Germiston. Accessed on 2 March 2021.
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46 Dube, p. 10.
47 Dube, p. 3.
48 Dube, pp. 10-11.
49 Dube, p. 25.
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Chapter 8

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3 Eugene Baron and Nico Adam Botha. 2020. *Obedience and Servant Leadership: Apollis, Appies, Buti, Buys*. Bloemfontein: Sunbonani, p. 8.

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6 Malesky.
7 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 4.
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13 "The majority of 'pure' Hottentots were virtually wiped out in a series of vicious smallpox epidemics during the course of the eighteen century, in some cases entire communities were eradicated." Today the term 'Hottentot' is considered offensive. In this publication the terminology prevalent at the time will be quoted to provide appropriate historical representation. Al J Venter. 1974. *Coloured, A profile of two million South Africans*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau, p. 250.
14 The first slaves arrived at the Cape in March 1658, about 400 in total from West Africa of which about half were sent on to Batavia. See Venter, p. 248.
15 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, pp. 38-42.
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17 Isaac Balie. 1988, *Die Geskiedenis van Genadendal: 1738-1988*. Johannesburg: Perskor.
18 Balie, p. 17.
19 Balie, p. 40.
20 "As far back as 1807, laws were passed in England that stopped the slave trade by the beginning of 1808. This meant slaves were no longer allowed to be imported. However, people who were already enslaved and their new-born children still remained slaves and could still be sold." See "Emancipation | Heritage of Slavery." n.d. Slavery.iziko.org.za. https://slavery.iziko.org.za/slaveemancipation. 21 Balie, p. 85.
22 Balie, pp. 9, 29.
23 Venter notes that all free 'people of colour' were recognised as British subjects in 1809. Ordinance 50 of 1828 recalled all pass laws and put all 'Free Persons of Colour' on an equal footing with White people. Later, following the emancipation of all slaves in 1834, the former slaves were placed on par with the Hottentot community which led to the integration of 'these two groups' into the emergent Coloured population (p. 486).
24 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 68.
25 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 100.
26 "After the Anglo-Boer War, with a threat of diminished political status staring them in the face from the north, Cape Coloured leaders rallied and established the African Political Organisation (A.P.O.) in Cape Town in 1902. By 1924 there were more than 120 branches across the country and membership of over 6 000 adult males" (Venter, p. 488).
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28 Venter refers to the military wing of the NEUM, called African People's Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA)(p. 492).
29 Adhikari, "Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration," pp. 470-71; Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 81.
30 Dick van der Ross. 2010. *A Blow to the Hoop . . . The Story of My Life and Times.* Newlands: Ampersand Press, pp. 107-15; 191-229.
31 Van der Ross, *A Blow to the Hoop,* p. 177.
32 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 98.
33 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 109.
34 David Yoram Saks. 1991. "The Failure of The Coloured Persons' Representative Council and its Constitutional Repercussions, 1956-1985." MA thesis, Rhodes University, p. 240.
35 Saks, p. 232.
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39 Saks, p. 236.
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41 Later followed by Mr Jakobus 'Jac' Rabie.
42 Venter, pp. 498-507.
43 Saks, p. 236.
44 Mohamed Adhikari. 2009. "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: towards a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa." In Mohamed Adhikari (ed.). *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa.* Cape Town: UCT Press, p. 6. https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/c0a95c41-a983-49fc-ac1f-7720d607340d/628130.pdf.
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48 Imraan Buccus. 2020. "Racism by and against Indian South Africans Poisons Our Land." *Daily Maverick.* 26 November. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-11-27-racism-by-and-against-indian-south-africans-poisons-our-land/.
49 Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation," p. 15.
50 Venter, p. 421.
51 Van der Ross, *Myths and Attitudes*, p. 108 (emphasis added).
52 Adhikari, "Hope, Fear, Shame, Frustration," p. 487.
53 Saks, pp. 240-41.
54 Saks, pp. 240-41.
55 Adhikari, "From narratives of miscegenation," p. 15.
56 Francois du Toit asserts his roots. "I'm twelfth generation African. Why can people call themselves American and Australians, but I'm not African? The fact that my ancestors made mistakes does not make me any less African. People are strange. I'm South African, and no one can tell me that I'm not." Biénne Huisman. 2020. "Delving into the Origins of Afrikaans." *Daily Maverick*. 29 November. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-11-28-delving-into-the-origins-of-afrikaans/.
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59 *Sunday Times*, 14 February 2021.
60 Van der Ross, *A Blow to the Hoop,* p. 186.
61 Saks, p. 236.
62 Saks, p. 235.
63 Statistics South Africa, 2012. *2011 Census in brief,* p. 18.
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65 Mary Robinson. 1998. "Foreword." In Brian Frost. 1998. *Struggling to forgive* – Nelson Mandela and South Africa's Search for Reconciliation. London: HarperCollins, p. ix.

Chapter 9

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2 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 24 March 1947. The article quotes Mr AE du Toit, Principal of Voortrekker Hoërskool, Boksburg, in his address to Rotarians.
3 *East Rand Express,* 8 May 1920.
4 Extract from the letter by Mr Gandhi to Mr Gorges, 30 June 1914. The Smuts-Gandhi agreement consists of a letter from EM Gorges, Secretary of the Ministry of the Interior, to Gandhi on behalf of the Minister of the Interior, General JC Smuts, and the reply of Gandhiji, dated 30 June 1914. Danish Peace Academy, The. n.d. "The Smuts-Gandhi Agreement, June 30, 1914." www.fredsakademiet.dk. http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/library/sydafrika.htm.
5 *East Rand Express,* 8 May 1920.
6 Extract from the letter by Mr Gandhi to Mr Gorges, 30 June 1914.

Chapter 10

1 *Boksburg Advertiser,* 3 April 2015.
2 *Boksburg Advertise*r, 1 October 2019.
3 Taegrin Morris (4) was killed during a carjacking incident in Reiger Park in 2015. Beauregard Tromp. 2014. "Little Taegrin's horrifc journey to death." *TimesLive*, 27 July 2014. https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2014-07-27-little-taegrins-horrific-journey-to-death/; Fanie Mthupha. 2017. "Taegrin Morris' parents still waiting for answers two years after their son's murder." *Boksburg Advertise*r, 1 October 2019. https://boksburgadvertiser.co.za/289276/taegrin-morris-parents-still-waiting-for-answers-two-years-after-sons-murder/.
4 *The Beam*, February 1993. *The Beam* (est. 1984), a free community newspaper, was distributed door to door in the following Coloured and Indian residential areas on the East Rand: Reiger Park, Delmore Park, Delmore Gardens, Actonville Rynsoord, Dikatole [Germiston], Villa Liza and central business districts of Boksburg, Benoni and Germiston.
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7 "Re-imagine Reiger Park." *Facebook.* https://www.facebook.com/ReimagineRP/about
8 "Re-imagine Reiger Park."
9 It would appear that the organisation no longer exists and despite my efforts to get more information about the activities of Re-imagine Reiger Park, Trevor Reeby did not respond to requests for written inputs for this book. From the available information it is clear that this was an important initiative and once again testimony to the resilience of the people of Reiger Park.
10 Email addresses: reigerparkbulletin@gmail.com, justusabrams@gmail.com, website: https://www.facebook.com/ReigerParkBulletin.

Chapter 11

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2 Paul McParlan. 2017. "The Tragedy of Albert Johanneson, the Pioneer Who Paved the Way for Black Footballers at the Top." *These Football Times,* November 30, 2017. https://thesefootballtimes.co/2017/11/30/the-tragedy-of-albert-johanneson-the-pioneer-who-paved-the-way-for-black-footballers-at-the-top/.
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6 McCourt.
7 McParlan.
8 According to Harrison, at the time of Johanneson's death, they were working on the autobiography. Some 17 years later, with encouragement from Albert's friends, Harrison completed *The Black Flash.*
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10 McParlan. Graham Bobby. n.d. "Albert Johanneson Leeds United." www.youtube.com. Accessed November 3, 2022. https://youtu.be/IIDXAvx3L_U.
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12 McCourt.
13 McCourt.
14 McParlan.
15 McParlan.
16 McCourt.
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18 McCourt.
19 Harrison, p. 134.
20 McCourt.
21 McCourt.
22 McParlan.
23 McCourt.
24 Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD). 2017. "Albert Johanneson." Internet Archive Wayback Machine. https://web.archive.org/web/20071206055800/http://furd.org/default.asp?intPageID=26.
25 Ruth Johnson, Howard Holmes, and Phil Vasili. n.d. *South African Footballers in Britain*. n.p.: Football Unites, Racism Divides (FURD). https://furd.org/uploads/files/South_African_Footballers_in_Britain_research_paper_%281%29.pdf, p. 36 (original capitalisation).
26 Paul Nicholl. 2013. *The Black Flash: The Albert Johanneson Story* by Paul Harrison (Review). https://www.amazon.com/Black-Flash-Albert-Johanneson-Story-ebook/dp/B00AI02GSQ.
27 Johnson, Holmes and Vasili, p. 37.
28 McParlan.
29 See Johnson, Holmes and Vasili.
30 FURD. n.d. "Work in South Africa." Furd.org. Accessed October 5, 2022. https://furd.org/content/work-in-south-africa.
31 McParlan.
32 Tomlinson.
33 McCourt.
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35 McParlan.
36 Harrison, p. 207.
37 McParlan.
38 Admin. 2018. "The Story Albert Johanneson, Footballing Pioneer." *Coloured South Africa*. June 6, 2018. https://www.colouredsa.co.za/profiles/the-story-albert-johanneson-footballing-pioneer.
39 Bobby.
40 McParlan.
41 Harrison, p. 208.
42 Bobby.
43 McParlan; Dave Tomlinson. "Players: Albert Johanneson – The Black Flash." *The Mighty Mighty Whites. The Definitive History of Leeds United.* www.mightyleeds.co.uk. http://www.mightyleeds.co.uk/players/johanneson.htm.
44 "Leeds Honour South African Trailblazer Albert Johanneson." 2019. *Business Day. BusinessLIVE.* 17 January 2019. Accessed October 6, 2022. https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/sport/soccer/2019-01-17-leeds-honour-south-african-trailblazer-albert-johanneson/.
45 Lorenz Kohler. 2020. "Leeds United Honour SA Legends Lucas Radebe and Albert Johanneson with Incredible Mural." *Kickoff.* 25 November 2020. Accessed October 6, 2022. https://www.snl24.com/kickoff/worldnews/english-premier-league/leeds-united-honour-sa-legends-lucas-radebe-and-albert-johanneson-with-incredible-mural-20201125.

Chapter 12

1 Justus Abrams. 2015. "Boksburg Stalwart turns 80." *Boksburg & Benoni tame Times,* 25 August.

2 Leonard Lutchman. 1988. "Aunt Mary's spirit lives on." *The Beam*, November.
3 Justus Abrams. 2015. "Who is Oom Georgie?" *Boksburg & Benoni tame Times*, 17 July.

Chapter 13

1 We obtained a copy of the personal reflections of the life of Mr Marthinus (Martin) Nathanial du Preez (aka Tienie) with particular emphasis on his stay in Benoni from the 1930s to the early 1960s, from Mr and Mrs C Billings towards the end of 2019. Mr Du Preez referred to his handwritten notes, 160 pages in total, neither as a biography nor as a memoir, but as a 'long letter' recalling his upbringing in South Africa and subsequent journey abroad. This chapter consists of edited extracts from this document with minor additions (ed).
2 'Die Blou Rokkies', i.e., 'Little Blue Dresses' refer to a religious organisation, the Latter Rain Mission (*Spadereën Sending*), established in 1927 whose female members customarily wear light blue dresses (ed).
3 Totius wrote "Vergewe en vergeet", a poem about the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War. The poem suggests that time has healed the wound, but the scar, the memory of the thousands of Boer women and children who died of starvation and diseases in the world's first-ever concentration camps remains indelible. To some extent this poem also resonates, according to Du Preez, to his own experience in South Africa of the 1930s to early 1960s. At the time of writing he still vividly remembered an incident when their local tennis team consisting of himself, Martin Ehrenreich (the captain), 'B' Fransch and Jimmy Jefferies went to Krugersdorp and were racially abused (ed).

Chapter 14

1 Information for the following paragraphs was gleaned from the following sources: "Benoni." 2022. *Wikipedia*, 14 January. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benoni; T. Britannica. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Benoni." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 1, 2017. https://www.britannica.com/place/Benoni; Keith Gardiner (ed.). 2013. *Benoni: A Golden Anniversary for a Golden City*. "Benoni Golden Anniversary - [PDF Document]." n.d. Fdocuments.net. Accessed October 1, 2022. https://fdocuments.net/document/benoni-golden-anniversary.html?page=1.
2 Mohamed Noor Nieftagodien, 2001. "The implementation of urban apartheid on the East Rand, 1948-1973: the role of local government and local resistance." DPhil thesis, University of the Witwatersrand.
3 Hemisha Bhana. 2014. *Portraits of Actonville*. SA Department of Arts and Culture and British Council.
4 See "Benoni."

Chapter 15

1 This recognition and award to Madiba were by the Community of Reiger Park in 1991. See the unedited transcription of his speech to Reiger Park community. Nelson Mandela. [1991]. "Speech to the community of Reiger Park." Archive: Centre of Memory. The Nelson Mandela Foundation. ZA COM MR-S-1334. https://archive.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/za-com-mr-s-1334. The Transitional Boksburg Municipality made a 'Freedom of the City' award to Madiba only in 1997.

Chapter 19

1 In writing this account I am fully aware that justice will not be served for all those who have built the soccer culture in this region, especially Reiger Park. We had by the grace of God such a wealth of stars among us and many names will not be mentioned or are lost because of the multiplicity of soccer talent we have experienced and enjoyed. I might even be found inaccurate in some instances by those who know more. This chapter is the result of interviewing a few people. Time has not allowed me to capture all the greats who lived among us and filled our hearts with joy and expectations as we saw them perform and used the talents that were given to them. In this we bring honour to our Lord. What follows is my perspective and that of a few soccer friends.
2 "Wikiwand - South African Games." n.d. *Wikiwand.* Accessed October 7, 2022. https://www.wikiwand.com/en/South_African_Games.
3 "Football in South Africa Timeline 1862-2012." n.d. *South African History Online."* Accessed October 7, 2022. www.sahistory.org.za. https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/football-south-africa-timeline-1862-2012.
4 "Football in South Africa Timeline 1862-2012."
5 "Wikiwand - South African Games."

Hoofstuk 23

1 Met die inwerkingstelling van die Groepsgebiedewet het Albertville reeds vir 'n geruimte tyd bestaan en het hoofsaaklik bruin mense daar gewoon. Dit was gesitueer aan die Northcliff kant van die Greymontvallei, nie ver van Sophiatown in Johannesburg nie. Alan Mabin redeneer dat: "The articulate and reasonably well-organised, largely middle-class residents of Albertville wanted to keep their property and to do so they saw the need to gain the support and solidarity of those who might be threatened elsewhere. But their calls fell on deaf ears. At the same time the coloured property owners of Newclare pushed for their area to be a coloured group area and thus sought the support of coloured tenants in Newclare; for they saw their main problem in terms of a possible Indian zoning of their area, which was predominantly Indian-owned. Newclare residents, in turn, faced the opposition of organised property owners in the Transvaal Indian Organisation (TIO), wealthy enough to hire a QC to put their case, and desperate to stave off the loss of their property rights in Newclare and elsewhere in the city and the feared removal to Diepkloof or, worse, Lenz". Alan Mabin. 1990. „Doom at One Stroke of the Pen." Urban Planning and Group Areas,

c. 1935–1955. The History Workshop, 6–10 February 1990. University of the Witwatersrand.
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Hoofstuk 26

1 Ehrenreich verwys na Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754-1838) wat tydens die Franse revolusie as óf 'n diplomaat óf 'n verraaier bestempel is, afhangende van die spreker se perspektief (reds.).
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4 Hanlie Retief. 2001. "Vat dan note van ons." *Rapport*, 15 April, p. 11.

Hoofstuk 29

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Chapter 32

1 'Ghoentas' is a local reference to Black people who passed as Coloureds to circumvent the pass laws.

Chapter 33

1 Lucky Thusi. 2017. "A journey of service." *Southern Courier*, 28 March 2017.

Chapter 34

1 J. Jacobs & L. Jacobs. 2013. Narratives on Alcohol Dependence in the Family in Post-Apartheid South Africa, *Journal of Addiction Research & Therapy*, 4:152. DOI:10.4172/2155-6105.1000152.

Chapter 35

1 I gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Ruth Hansrod-Pillay, the oldest surviving member of the Shamrocks Basketball team of 1951; Jim Abrams, my Standard 4 and Standards 6-8 Commerce teacher; Lynette Solomons-Feeke, my sister; Ursula Hero, my niece, and the youngest Lavinians hockey player; Barry Few, one of the first Reiger Park Methodist Choir members, fellow Sunday School teacher and great friend; Les Theron, fellow Methodist; Desmond Hansrod, my cousin; Margaret van Bresies, aerobics coach and former Lavinians player; Leonard Plaatjies, the Sport Administrator of the Ekurhuleni Town Council; Gladys Fortuin-Williams, my Sub A teacher's youngest daughter; and Nellie Petersen, my friend, a fellow hockey player and teacher.

Chapter 37

1 Fanie Mthupha. "Life is a canvas for promising local portrait artist." *Boksburg Advertiser.* 13 November 2018. https://boksburgadvertiser.co.za/326723/bright-future-for-portrait-painter/.

Chapter 38

1 Turlough O'Riordan. 2018. "Brennan, Stan (Stanislaus)." 2018. *Dictionary of Irish Biography*. n.d. www.dib.ie. Accessed October 24, 2022. https://www.dib.ie/biography/brennan-stan-stanislaus-a10023. **DOI:** https://doi.org/10.3318/dib.010023.v1. See also the accounts of Father Stan's personal interactions and contributions elsewhere in this publication.
2 Brian Mathabela. 2016. *St Anthony's Education Centre 2016 Annual Report*, 50th Anniversary. n.p.: n.p.
3 O'Riordan.
4 After the *Beam* ceased publication Jerry Theys used its name for his local newspaper, initially much to the displeasure of Father Stan.
5 Cited in O'Riordan.
6 Mathabela.
7 Personal communication, 9 September 2022.
8 *St Anthony's Education Centre 2016 Annual Report, 50th Anniversary.* n.p.: n.p.
9 Mathabela.
10 O'Riordan.
11 O'Riordan.
12 O'Riordan.
13 *St Anthony's Education Centre 2016 Annual Report.*
14 *St Anthony's Education Centre 2016 Annual Report.*
15 George K du Plessis. 2012. "Father Stan Brennan OFM: Words of comfort and eulogy." Tribute delivered on 12 July at St Francis Care Centre, Eveleigh, Boksburg.

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1 Harry Dugmore. 1991. "'Knowing all the names': The Ebenezer Congregational Church and the creation of community among the Coloured Population of Johannesburg (18941939)." History Workshop Conference, University of the Witwatersrand. Accessed 24 October 2022. https://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/items/0a3c7513-299f-4c23-b10b-123d9fa0ac03, pp. 64-65.
2 Dugmore, p. 64; RE van der Ross. n.d. "Mr J W Ontong's Reminiscences of Johannesburg." Van der Ross Collection, Document 41, Library of the University of Cape Town, pp. 1-2.
3 Dugmore, p. 65.
4 Dugmore, p. 67.
5 Dugmore, p.67; AL Behr, 1952. "*Three Centuries of Coloured Education.*" Ph.D. thesis, Potchefstroom University for CHE, p. 279.

6 Dugmore, p. 65.
7 Dugmore, p. 75.
8 Dugmore, p. 75.
9 *Boksburg Advertiser en Boksburg Volksblad,* 4 September 1959.
10 These are lessons and advice, also articulated by numerous town planning experts over the years that South African authorities seem to have ignored. As we still struggle, in 2021, to provide adequate and affordable housing for the masses close to places of work and other amenities, we should revisit our strategies and learn from the experiences of other countries and the advice of Mr Hills. The invention of the internet and the explosion of the use of online meetings and webinars during 2020 and 2021 will probably have a significant impact on future urban land use patterns and town and transport planning; however, densification will remain important to inform sustainable land use patterns.
11 *The East Rand Express*, 8 November 1905.
12 *The East Rand Express*, 26 November 1910.
13 Sarie van Niekerk. 2004. *Rapport (Gauteng Nuus)*, 7 November.
14 Log Book, Government Coloured School, Boksburg Location, 1905.

Hoofstuk 40

1 "Tribute to Mr Arthur J. Hare on his retirement. Souvenir Brochure." 1991. Reiger Park: Drommedaris Primary School.
2 Minutes of Boksburg Town Council meeting, July 1958.

Chapter 42

1 Ntombikayise Sibeko. "Mourners gather for Alfred Woodington's memorial." *Boksburg Advertiser.* 7 May 2021. https://boksburgadvertiser.co.za/411948/mourners-gather-for-alfred-woodingtons-memorial/.
2 I asked Alfred Woodington in late May 2020 to write his story for this book. Afterwards, in our brief communication, he was non-committal and wanted a face-to-face meeting before he would agree. Largely due to the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic the envisaged meeting never happened. Woodington unexpectedly died on 26 April 2021. Shortly after his death, Alfred's son Elton presented me with two essays written by his father. This chapter is an edited version of those essays (ed).
3 This perception reveals a strong resentment against the emerging (lower) middle class in Reiger Park. Although the perception/observation of poor performing kids being included in the academic stream is unlikely to be true in general, although there might have been exceptions. It is nevertheless one that obviously made an impact on Woodington and influenced his choices (ed).
4 Danny Cassell said at the memorial service that Woodington and Chris Hani, the leader of the Communist Party, were close and often visited the Reiger Park community together (Sibeko).
5 "Courage amid the Chaos." 1992. *Sunday Star,* 17 May.
6 Jerry Theys. 1994. "Rival gangs call truce." *The Sun Beam*, June.
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8 Ntombikayise Sibeko. 2020. "A glimpse at old-school Reiger Park." 2020. *Boksburg Advertiser*, 30 October.

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3 Abrahams, p. 15.
4 Abrahams, p. 18.
5 Abrahams, pp. 37-40.
6 Abrahams, p. 149.
7 Abrahams, pp. 161, 194.
8 Micayla Jacobs. 2012 (2022). "Peter Henry Abrahams." *South African History Online.* www.sahistory.org.za. Accessed October 24, 2022. https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/peter-henry-abrahams.
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Parktown and Cape Stands (Benoni, ca 1950-1960)

LEGEND

A1 Anglican Church
A2 Ebenezer Congregational Church
A3 Roman Catholic Church
A4 Mosque

B1 Benoni Coloured Primary School
B2 Benoni Indian Primary School
B3 Agricultural Primary School (Africans)
B4 William Hills High School

C1 Dr Wolpe's Surgery
C2 Dr Dezulivic
C3 Benoni Clinic
C4 Grollman's Pharmacy
C5 Society for the Protection of Animals (SPCA)

D1 Beer Hall
D2 Davey Social Centre
D3 Tennis Courts
D4 Sports Fields
D5 Star Bioscope
D6 Liberty Bioscope

E1 Greek Shop
E2 Geishan's Butchery
E3 Dry Cleaners
E4 007 Shop
E5 Epstein & Schneider Hardware Store

F1 Migrant Labourers' Hostel
F2 Compound

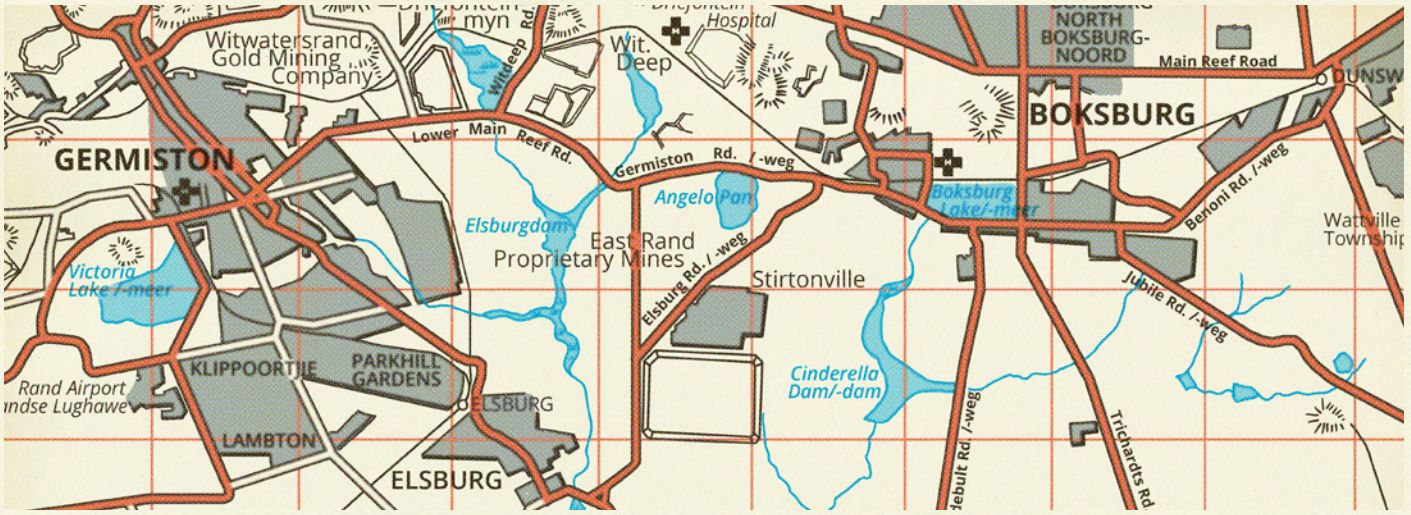
G1 Benoni Brick Works
G2 Zinchem
G3 Power Station

H1 Council Offices
H2 Police Station

G1 Historical markers & areas
Railway line
Former stands (1950-1960)
First Str. Former streets & names (1950-1960)
Coloured Area Coloured section *(former)*
Indian section *(former)*
African section *(former)*
Shops and businesses *(Indian)*
Shops and businesses *(Coloureds & Chinese)*

N

0 100 200 400 Meters



Reiger Park: Home to many / 'n Tuiste is a comprehensive social history of Reiger Park (previously known as Stirtonville) located in Boksburg and wedged between Benoni and Germiston in the Ekurhuleni Metro.

The book records the histories and lives of the people on the East Rand, from the early days of gold mining in the 1890s, the development of the industrial heartland of South Africa in the early to mid-20th century, the transformation to democracy in the 1990s, and the varied social and political experiences of the early 21st century. This book tells of the establishment of the township, the forced removals of its inhabitants from their previous places of residence and their settlement in their new surroundings. The inhabitants' autobiographical writing and accounts of their lives told in Afrikaans and English augment the formal history of Reiger Park.

The authors lived for extended periods in the community and are thus well placed to record the intricacies of its history and the passions of its inhabitants.

'The authors are to be commended for recording the history of Reiger Park with so much care and attention. It is a remarkable achievement.'
— Judge Mahomed Navsa, retired judge of the South African Supreme Court of Appeal.

Cecil H Morden studied Economics at the University of the Western Cape, Bellville, South Africa. In 1988 he completed his MSc (Economics) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, USA. He is a retired economist who previously worked at the South African National Treasury. As a former resident of Reiger Park, Boksburg he was involved in several community projects, including the East Rand Alumni Society.

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